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New Masses

JUNE 18, 1935 10c

What Kind of Third Party?

Farmer-Labor Leader Reveals the Plan: Invite Huey Long and Coughlin but "Keep the Communists Out"

By JOHN BROMAN

How the Communist Party Works

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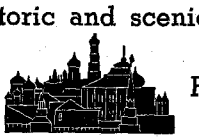
Most interesting country in the world today! Busy cities, active villages, historic and scenic wonders. See Moscow's  Red Square. Take a trip on the Trans-Siberian Railway or a Black Sea cruise. All-inclusive rates per day are only $15 First Class, $8 Tourist Class, $5 Third Class. Summer sessions at Moscow University. Third Annual Theatre Festival in Moscow September 1 to 10. Send now for interesting Booklet NM-6 and map.

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New Masses

JUNE 18, 1935

Russell T. Limbach

Roosevelt Cuts Wages

THE Supreme Court having spoken, the Great White Father is pictured as brooding in his lonely tepee. In reality Mr. Roosevelt's position is a happy one. The top leadership of the A. F. of L. portrays him as the vilely defeated Moses of the Minimum Wage. But the President has already tossed William Green into the bull-rushes and is leading business to the promised land of bigger and better wage cuts. The current slashing of wages and lengthening of hours is conveniently blamed on the Schechter case decision. Actually wage reductions are the logical results of previous Administration policy. Where labor is not strongly organized and militantly led, the real determinants of wages have not been poorly enforced minimums but the amounts paid on relief. The higher the wages on work relief or the allowances on home relief the more industry has to pay for labor. Mr. Roosevelt had seen to it that industry need pay less and less. C.W.A. was revised downward into F.E.R.A. in response to the wishes of business, and F.E.R.A. was revised downward into the $19-a-month schedule of the present work relief program. Before the Supreme Court decision, the Roosevelt Administration was already committed to lower wages.

HYPOCRISY reeked from the White House statement of June 4. The President felt, according to that statement, that "the government should take a practical and definite step to show its good faith in maintaining the larger objectives sought by N.R.A." What step more "practical and definite" than to order revision upward of work and home relief scales to force payment of decent wages by industry? The White House said nothing of relief scales. Instead Mr. Roosevelt asked legislation to require observance of code labor standards in government purchases and on government contracts. It was admitted that this would affect less than one percent of the nation's industrial production. Is such legislation needed if the government wishes to set up labor standards? Judging from the Colt Firearms and Ford cases, it is doubtful whether the government would try to enforce code standards even if it had the power. Furthermore, since with Mr. Roosevelt the hand is always quicker than the eye, was there a wage-cutting purpose in the reference to minimum wages rather than union standards on construction projects? Two days after the White House statement, the Army Quartermaster depot at Philadelphia was instructed to ignore N.R.A. standards in accepting bids on clothing. The army bought $70,000,000 worth of clothing during the past 12 months and is expected—with expansion of C.C.C.—to buy $116,000,000 worth during the next 12 months. Nearly all mills do some army business, and fair labor standards in government purchases would go far to maintain decent working conditions in the textile industry. What happened to that "good faith in maintaining the larger objectives sought by N.R.A."?

THE answer is that Mr. Roosevelt is keeping faith with the real objectives of N.R.A.—the increased development of monopoly forms in American business, the lessening of the labor concessions necessary to make the program palatable at first, the slow erection of new instruments of repression to beat down working-class militancy. Mr. Green complains that the "skeleton N.R.A." sent to Congress by the President "continues the National Recovery Act in form but without substance until April 1, 1936." The form

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may have vanished, but the substance is there—for business. Mr. Roosevelt is empowered to grant exemption from the anti-trust laws to "voluntary" agreements among business men, but nothing is said of granting this exemption only if labor standards and labor rights are observed. Passage of the new N.R.A. will mark a step further toward the "self government" of industry *a la* Mr. Swope. The "labor spokesmen" at Washington who are the tail of the capitalist dog were reported to have wagged frantically about this at the White House. Mr. Roosevelt, like Castoria, is always soothing. But nothing was done about the protests. Wages must go down, but profit margins are to be protected from competition. The benevolent gentleman from Hyde Park is delivering the goods.

United Front

THE photograph in the recent issue of The Daily Worker in which Socialist Norman Thomas shakes the hand of Communist Angelo Herndon caused the pulse of many an American worker to skip a beat. It visualized a slogan which springs from the dominant need of the badly disorganized and unorganized proletariat of America: "United Front." Millions of the dispossessed are straining toward combined action, for a final breakdown of the barriers between all sections of the exploited. Labor is finally waking up to the recognition of its weak spot: the inability of the millions to coordinate their strength. The Communists, the only capable analysts of historic forces, understand this and they let no day go by without drumming the lesson home. The plenary session of the Communist Party's Central Committee has addressed another and even more urgent appeal to the leaders of the Socialist Party to confer on "united action in this critical hour." (Since the N.R.A. decision.) The Communist appeal points out that "a flood of new legislation against civil rights has prepared the general offensive of capital." These laws, they explain, will not only be used against Communists.

NORMAN THOMAS' recent declaration supporting the Gallup miners, his denunciation of the kidnaping of the Communist organizer Robert Minor, his unconditional espousal of the Angelo Herndon defense, were big steps in the right direction. "We put this question," the Communists wrote to their Socialist brothers: "Would it not be a thousand times more effective if the two parties conducted a joint planned campaign which united our forces and the broader forces that would be encouraged by this unity, in a great united front for civil rights?" This question is indeed being asked in a multitude of steel-towns and mining camps. Isolated united front actions, growing in frequency and scope, occur throughout the country. The national chairman of the Socialist Party spoke from the same platform as the Communist organizer in Cleveland on May Day—a rare and highly significant occurrence. Communists and Socialists collaborate in the great movement among the steel workers, particularly in the rank and file actions in the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin workers. Socialist spokesmen endorsed the Communist-inspired bill H. R. 2827 at the recent Congressional hearings. The fight against fascism and war has enlisted thousands of Communists and Socialists; the student and youth movement is an example for their elders. All eyes are on France where the united front of Communists and Socialists has definitely checked the advance of Gallic fascism. On the other hand, Czechoslovakia has taught a highly important lesson: the fascists made sweeping gains in the recent election following the Socialist refusal of common front with the Communists. The moral is obvious and it is criminal for any political leader among the proletariat to be blind to it.

"WE are ready" the Communists here in America say to the Socialists "to discuss the united front from the most elementary issues of civil rights and economic demands up to the problems of a mass Labor Party." The article elsewhere in this issue—"What Kind of a Third Party?" reveals the plans of the demagogues to create a third party which will serve to sluice the discontent of the people into channels safe for capitalism. A genuine Labor Party, and that means a party based on the trade unions and organizations of workingmen and middle-class strata—of all political shades including the Communists, of course—is *the* necessity today. The united front of the Socialists and Communists would be a big step ahead in achieving such a party. Else the danger is great that America will witness the formation of a potentially fascist third party led by an amalgam of Huey Long, Father Coughlin and Dr. Townsend.

Bull-dog Baldwin

THE shake-up in the British Cabinet represents no fundamental change for the imperialist gang in power, but a strengthening of the British war policy and the pro-Hitler, anti-Soviet orientation of the government, as described by R. Palme Dutt in last week's NEW MASSES. Ramsay MacDonald handed over the premiership to his best pal and severest critic Stanley Baldwin, and slipped into Baldwin's former post of Lord President of the Council. Stronger measures are needed so the bull-dog takes the place of the canny Scot. It is a striking fact that these two, one a reformist "labor leader" and the other a diehard conservative, have held the prime ministerial power in England for twelve years, in almost equal shares; and it has been impossible to tell which was the more reactionary. The new government shows its hand by appointing Sir Samuel Hoare, a fervent White Guard sympathizer and the man who has done most to rivet the Government of India Bill on Great Britain's starving colonials, to the portfolio of Foreign Minister. Anthony Eden, whom everybody expected to take Simon's job, was ignored. The British ruling class intensely disliked Eden's cordiality to the Soviets on his visit to Moscow in April.

Czech-Soviet Pact

WHILE the Western powers maneuver for war, the Soviet Union continues to press its peace policy on every frontier. Following the conclusion of the mutual defense agreement with France, a similar treaty was signed on May 17, between the U. S. S. R. and Czechoslovakia. Dr. Eduard Benes, the Czechoslovakian Foreign Minister, is known as one of the clearest-sighted realists in Europe. He is aware that the only defense of the small nations against being swept to their destruction by the armies and airplanes of the greater powers lies in solidarity with the Soviet Union by means of mutual agreements against the aggressor. Czechoslovakia, moreover, a young nation which has only enjoyed a short period of independence, is already threatened by the Nazi program of "gathering together all countries of the Holy Roman Empire"—in other words, subjugating most the people of Central Europe to Hitler. The pact with Moscow will considerably cool the zeal of the Nazis. Dr. Benes said just before his visit to the

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Soviets June 7: "I was always convinced that the peace of Europe was impossible without the Soviet Union." Last week a credit agreement was also signed by the U. S. S. R. and Czechoslovakia on "the most liberal terms ever granted to the Soviet Union by a capitalist state." The credit is a five-year loan of $10,500,000 at 6 percent, guaranteed by the Czech government and providing for the purchase of materials in that country.

"Big-mouthed Admiral"

BY a sort of unwritten law long prevalent in the Navy Department senile admirals emitting fire and brimstone against powers friendly to the United States have been considered immune to discipline. But when Rear Admiral Yates Sterling chose the Soviet Union as the object of his attack, and when his call to war against the Workers' Republic was issued in the press of Hitler's American agent, William Randolph Hearst, he reckoned without a new force of which he may not be fully aware. He did not take into account the indignation of millions of workers in America and the world who have sworn to defend the U. S. S. R. with their lives. The exposure by The Daily Worker of Sterling's vicious role sent a thunder of protest rolling into Washington. Not only were workers aroused; senators, representatives, editors, retired army officers and members of the American Legion also demanded the admiral's dismissal. Among these were: Major General William S. Graves, Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces in Siberia in 1918-20; Senator Capper of Kansas; Maxwell S. Stewart, associate editor of The Nation, and George Soule of The New Republic; representatives Maverick of Texas and Marcantonio of New York, and Thomas J. Sullivan, former Lieutenant Commander of the Navy and a member of the American Legion. Congressman Maverick said to a Daily Worker correspondent: "This government recognized the Soviet Union and has friendly relations with her. The Admiral is stirring up trouble by talking criminal nonsense. . . This big-mouthed Admiral ought to be kicked bodily out of the Navy." The State Department has already been forced to repudiate Stirling. The popular outcry against Hearst's tool and mouthpiece may compel Roosevelt to get rid of him altogether.

Brief Career of a Liar

MR. HEARST'S zeal to protect America from the Reds and to egg on war preparations against the Soviet Union has been bolstered in grand style, for a while, by one Andrew Smith, "Communist." Mr. Smith has just returned from the U.S.S.R. where he has spent the last two years; he is now busily concocting horror stories for the edification of Mr. Hearst's readers—stories of lurid starvation and cruelty, bureaucratic terror and gross inefficiency. There can be no doubt—Mr. Hearst shrieks in scare headlines—that Mr. Smith's tales are true because Mr. Smith was an "eye-witness" and a one-time member of the Communist Party. Smith has an interesting history. He went to the Soviet Union looking for a "soft berth." He was unable to gain entrance to the Party University. Instead, he was expelled from the Party, for loafing. Up to his expulsion in 1934, Smith had sent glowing letters to friends here about good food and improved clothing in Soviet Russia, the free opera tickets, the fine hospitalization, the low prices, the absence of speed-up. After Smith was expelled from the Party, Mr. Hearst came along with tempting offers—money and publicity. Mr. Smith forgot the glowing tributes he had written; he sat down to write what Mr. Hearst wanted him to write. His stories stood up just long enough for letters giving his record to arrive from the Soviet Union. Now Mr. Smith's brief day is over.

Guild Goes Forward

AT ITS annual convention in Cleveland the American Newspaper Guild on June sixth declared itself in favor of affiliation with the A. F. of L., by a vote of 76½ to 46½. Thus the long campaign, waged by an aggressive and realistic leadership and looking to effective labor action for newswriters has resulted in victory. Heywood Broun, president, and Sherwood Eddy, executive secretary, were reelected. The Guild will go ahead greatly strengthened. Among other positive achievements of the convention were the endorsement of an independent Labor Party, and the empowering of its National Executive Board to further the establishment of such a party, and a resolution in favor of a free press in the interests of the masses, "not stopping until the men and women who write, graphically portray, or edit news have achieved freedom of conscience to report faithfully labor struggles . . . and refuse distortion or suppression to create economic, industrial and military wars." Nothing could illustrate more clearly than this ringing declaration how the Guild has steadily progressed in political clarity, taking its rightful place as leader in the tremendous national struggles of all white collar workers.

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WILLIAM BROWDER, *Business Manager*

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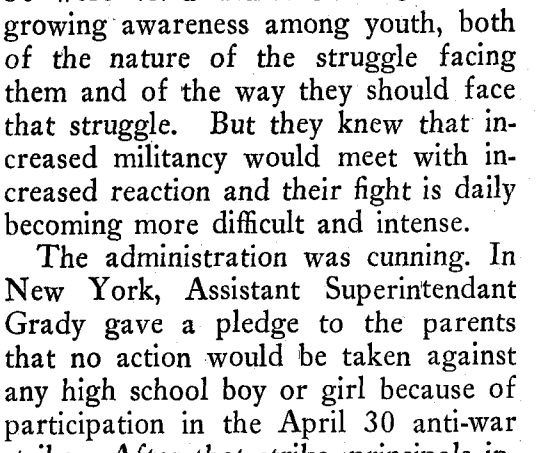
Blacklist in the High Schools

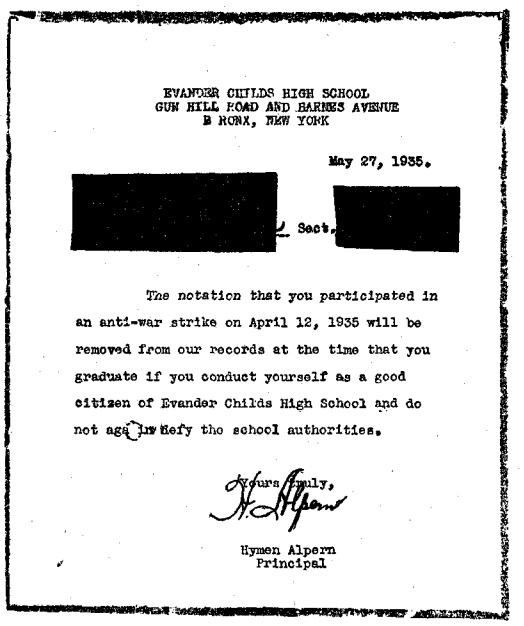
TWO of the most spectacular and successful actions against war and fascism during the last six months have come from the students and youth. The student strike of April 12 and the United Youth Day of May 30 were vivid demonstrations of the growing awareness among youth, both of the nature of the struggle facing them and of the way they should face that struggle. But they knew that increased militancy would meet with increased reaction and their fight is daily becoming more difficult and intense.

The administration was cunning. In New York, Assistant Superintendant Grady gave a pledge to the parents that no action would be taken against any high school boy or girl because of participation in the April 30 anti-war strike. After that strike, principals insisted that the official notice taken of the "cuts" was only the normal procedure in the case of a cut class. But facts are slowly leaking out, giving evidence of a systematic attempt to break the militant spirit of the students.

The reason behind this was well expressed by Principal Mason of Lincoln High School in an interview with some students. "I can forgive a boy," he said, "who cuts classes in order to meet a girl he is fond of, but cutting classes on April 12 I consider a much more serious breach of discipline." To prevent this "serious breach of discipline" —the participation in the active united front against war and fascism—or to punish those who defied the administration, every means from persuasion to spying was permissible. One of the most vivid illustrations of the method used is a memorandum made by the



A student is barred from the History Department Service Squad because he belongs to the N.S.L.



EVANDER CHILDS HIGH SCHOOL
GUN HILL ROAD AND BARNES AVENUE
THE BRONX, NEW YORK

May 27, 1935.

[redacted] Sect. [redacted]

The notation that you participated in an anti-war strike on April 12, 1935 will be removed from our records at the time that you graduate if you conduct yourself as a good citizen of Evander Childs High School and do not again defy the school authorities.

Yours truly,
H. Alpern

Hymen Alpern
Principal

Assistant Dean of Lincoln High School, now in the possession of the National Student League and reproduced on this page: "This boy is under supervision. Watch on April 12. Received warning. Belongs to N. S. L." Any member of the National Student League in the high schools of New York and elsewhere is now not only under suspicion, but is in danger of having the participation in the strike used against them to prevent his entrance into college, and of being refused the normal privileges of ill students.

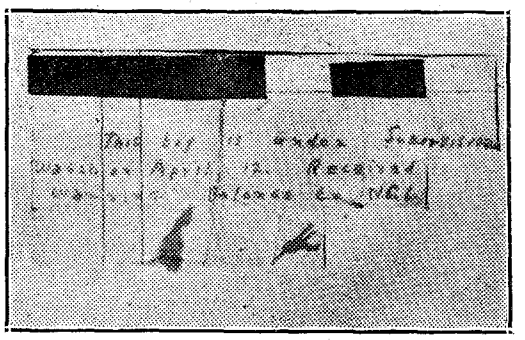
A note from S. Garrett, Chairman of the History Department of Lincoln High School, also reproduced here, is evidence of the treatment given the members of her class who were unfortunate enough to disagree with her. Benjamin Jaffe, a student of the same school, was told that he could expect "no more consideration" because of wearing a strike tag, although he had only recently had an operation.

Edward Berkowitz, another student, was told that his chances of entering college and of getting a state scholarship were forfeit because of his participation in the student strike. The principal of Lincoln High School has stated his determination to "spare no effort to punish these students."

Other oppressive activities of the administrations are too well known to all active anti-fascist and anti-war fighters to be recited. The motive for the authorities' actions has only partly been that of revenge for the militant students' defiance. In greater measure their objective is to break and paralyze the active leadership of the students' struggle. This can be seen, for instance, by the circular sent out by the principal of Evander Childs High School, to all students who participated in the strike. Here, "conduct . . . as a good citizen of Evander Childs High School" is held up as a condition of having the notation of participation in the strike removed from the records—notation whose presence would very effectively bar any entrance into college. The same Edward Berkowitz was told that "it was unfortunate that he was a senior. If he had been a lower termer, he might have cleared his record by being "good"—by dropping, that is, any activities that disagreed with the authorities' idea of Americanism.

The second point of importance is that in most cases, students were not only deceived as to the amount of administrative action that would be taken, but that the administration kept silent until near the end of the school year, thus very effectively paralyzing any student mass pressure in reply to their disciplinary actions. In some cases, students were called up during examinations and every opportunity was used to lower the morale of the students by intimidation.

The united front of the forces making for war and fascism is growing with terrible speed. Students need active cooperation and assistance as much and perhaps more than any other group in the fight against these twin evils. The Metropolitan Student Defense Committee is calling a mass meeting in the Central Opera House on Friday evening, June 14, to arouse public action against administrative fascism. One of the most militant fronts of the struggle is in need of active support, and it should be given it, before, on and after Friday evening.



"This boy is under supervision. Watch on April 12. Received warning. Belongs to N.S.L."

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Chiang Kai-shek Sells China

THE full acceptance of Japan's demands has been unconditionally promised by General Ho Ying-Ching, Minister of War at Nanking and for years Chiang Kai-shek's right-hand man. All regular Chinese troops will be withdrawn from North China, leaving the Japanese in undisputed control of the Peiping-Tientsin area. General Ho Ying-Ching, fearing mutiny among the Chinese troops when they learn of the capitulation, has had to conceal from them the reasons for their withdrawal. Thus Chiang Kai-shek crowns his treachery to the Chinese people.

For two years, since the Nanking delegates signed the Tangksee truce of May 31, 1933, there has been a succession of minor flare-ups in North China. Each time, after a proper application of Japanese "pressure," Chiang Kai-shek has gracefully surrendered—a recent instance being February 2, when Chiang's delegates signed away a thousand square miles of Chahar province in a ten-minute conference at Tatang. "But Chiang is playing for time," chorus his friends; "he must unify the country first"—*i.e.*, use his airplanes, artillery and best troops against the Chinese Red Army. "He cannot afford to provoke Japan while he is building China's industrial base, promoting rural reform and abolishing opium."

In the meantime, China's economic crisis becomes more acute, millions of additional peasants in Kweichow and Szechwan provinces throw in their lot with the Red armies and the opium revenues flowing into Chiang Kai-shek's coffers (opponents of Nanking's opium monopoly are being executed, Chiang's agent proudly reports to Geneva) grow from year to year. Since the surrender at Tangku, Chiang Kai-shek has continued to "unify" the country along these lines and the further capitulations in North China have been carefully explained as parts of his "cagey game" against Japan.

But we have now witnessed the logical end of Chiang Kai-shek's successive betrayals in North China. A series of lesser demands presented at the end of May was rapidly superseded by others much more far-reaching. The Nanking authorities delayed long enough to give some "face" to their show of opposition and then surrendered unconditionally. Chiang Kai-shek did not find it so easy to justify compliance in this instance as a "strategic retreat." The Japanese therefore helped him out by an unparalleled intensity of warlike preparations. Japanese troops marched through the Chinese areas in Tientsin; reinforcements — labeled replacements —reached North China from Japan; belligerent statements poured forth from all the Japanese agents in China; the Japanese War Minister conferred with the Japanese Viceroy in Manchuria regarding the military steps to be taken; and Foreign Minister Hirota, erstwhile advocate of "moderation," opponent of the Japanese "military" party, etc., sent Ariyoshi (now an ambassador—what an "honor" for Nanking!) back to tell Chiang Kai-shek that things look dark and he'd better submit.

The demagogy involved in this Japanese furore went to unheard-of lengths, including such statements as that made by Colonel Takashi Sakai: "We are forced to the conclusion that Chiang Kai-shek must relinquish his post." No A. F. of L. leader, preparing to sell out a strike, ever had the ground so well laid for him.

Chiang Kai-shek's earlier surrenders to Japan—the Shanghai armistice (May 5, 1932) and the Tangku truce —admirably qualified him for his A. F. of L. role in North China. The Tangku truce, in fact, may well be at the bottom of the present situation. On the face of it, this truce merely provided for the withdrawal of Chinese troops from the "demilitarized area"—the northern section of Hopei province adjoining Manchuria. The events that followed its signature on May 31, 1933, however, were noted with growing amazement by all observers. The staffing of the North China regime with notorious pro-Japanese scoundrels, such as Huang Fu; the restoration of through Peiping-Mukden railway traffic; the resumption of postal communications with Manchukuo; and the lowering of tariffs on Japanese goods—what did these things mean? It is now known that they were pledged by Chiang Kai-shek in a series of secret annexes to the Tangku truce. What more do these annexes contain? Did they provide for the withdrawal from North China? Do they perhaps call for Nanking's open recognition of Manchukuo, as soon as Chiang Kai-shek can "deliver" it? Are the Japanese asking Chiang to make good *now* on these pledges? Is this the reason why China's "violation" of the Tangku truce figures so largely in the current Japanese recriminations?

What will happen now in the Peiping-Tientsin area should be clear from what happened in the "demilitarized area." From the beginning, it was dominated by Japanese forces or the equivalent—that is, Chinese forces accepting Japanese control and direction. Enormous quantities of Japanese goods poured through the Great Wall passes and seeped into North China through the "demilitarized area." At Chanli—one of the railway towns in the area—a recent investigator discovered 94 heroin and morphine shops, all protected by Japanese consular or military officials. Through such shops in the "demilitarized area" an estimated 120,000 narcotic addicts (the number is rapidly growing) in Hopei province alone are derived largely from the south-central provinces; Japanese opium holds the field in North China.

The Japanese imperialists have not only taken over control of the Peiping-Tientsin area. They are definitely moving to strengthen their grip on Inner Mongolia, forever inching up toward the Soviet frontiers. The Kalgan-Urga caravan route may soon be cut. But as Chiang Kai-shek's agents step out of North China and the Japanese replace their covert domination by an open control and occupation, the game is just beginning. For this act will open the eyes of many Chinese who have never before clearly appreciated the treacherous role that Chiang is playing in this crisis of China's national life. It must bring new forces into the anti-Japanese movement, forces strong enough to burst the bonds of repression that Chiang Kai-shek has fastened upon it. On this development will be built that open national-revolutionary struggle of the Chinese masses which, spreading over the whole country, will spell the doom of all foreign imperialism—Western as well as Japanese—in the Far East.

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"GLAD TO SEE YOU, SON" *Jacob Burck*

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What Kind of a Third Party?

JOHN BROMAN

LOS ANGELES.

A THIRD party in 1936, a movement to emancipate the American people and bring us "the kind of freedom the Constitution intended us to have," a movement to bring us, not Communism (forbid the word!), but a "cooperative commonwealth," not dictatorship but democratic ideals fully expressed in a government of, by and for the people—

Ah, these are noble ideas to roll under one's tongue, all in the tradition of our best political leaders in American history!

Mr. F. H. Shoemaker, one-time Farmer-Labor Congressman from Minnesota, would be delighted to attend a Hollywood soiree of earnest-minded folk to explain these radical but not revolutionary ideas. After all, how true it is that the thinking peope of America must be the foundation of such a third party movement. The California phase of the movement might well grow from such a yeasty group.

Mr. Shoemaker, meet Mrs. Harris, and Dr. Bennett, and Mr. Wallace, and Mr. Carrol, and Dr. Everett, and Miss Schwartz, and Mr. Ashe. Excellent, earnest-minded people, all of them, albeit some of them a little worried about unemployment and the dole and the high cost of meat.

..And now, Mr. Shoemaker, will you please sit there on the sofa and tell us all *about the third party movement? And what do you really think of President Roosevelt?*

Mr. Shoemaker, member of the Socialist Party and member of the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota, which he calls "the vanguard of democracy in America," leaned forward on the sofa and cleared his throat in preparation for the enlightenment of these worthy people on the third-party movement.

"President Roosevelt," he said, "has done nothing for anybody except Wall Street. Profits of big corporations have increased, while the lot of the common people has grown steadily worse. Mr. Morgan even has his own man in the cabinet in Morgenthau, secretary of the treasury. Just take off the 'thau' and you've got it right.

"We have nothing to hope for from the two old parties. One is a carbuncle and the other a boil. They are the Gold Dust Twins of Wall Street and no matter which one is in power, they do the dirty work for Wall Street. We used to think that we could accomplish something by capturing one of the old-line parties, such as Upton Sinclair did out here in California last fall. We succeeded in capturing old-line parties in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Montana, but after we'd captured them, we found that we had nothing, as Upton Sinclair found. We had been cheated.

"So the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota and the Progressive Party in Wisconsin were formed and now we have decided that a national third-party movement is essential, a third party which would coalesce all the liberal forces in the United States. To such an end we have called a third-party convention to be held next July 5, probably in Chicago, in order to get this thing under way before the presidential election year."

The Questions Begin

ALL present had been listening attentively to Mr. Shoemaker's authoritative wisdom. Mr. Shoemaker smiled. So far so good! But now a sinister questioning voice is heard. A college professor of economics, perhaps most easily classified as a right-wing Marxist, wants to know if certain groups of fascist tendencies have been invited to this thiry-party convention. What about Huey Long and Father Coughlin, Mr. Shoemaker?

"Father Coughlin!" Shoemaker snorted indignantly. "Why, he's nothing but a thief! I furnished him with all the material I had collected about Hoover's trading in coolie slaves in China and what did he do? He used all my material and never gave me a bit of credit, even when I protested to him about it. Don't talk to me about Father Coughlin!"

"Well, did you invite them to the convention?"

"Well, yes, we invited Father Coughlin and Huey Long."

"But, Mr. Shoemaker, don't you think it is dangerous to have such groups, who are obviously fascist in tendency, participating in such a movement?"

"No, I don't think it is dangerous. We won't let them get control and what we want to do is win their followers away from them."

Yet another delicate question enters the argument. Will the Communist Party be asked to participate in the convention?

"Well, personally, I am not in favor of having the Communists participate. Understand, I'm not speaking for the Farmer-Labor Party, but if I have anything to do with it, they won't be in it. You can't trust 'em. They disrupt everything they go into. In Minnesota we don't have any Communists to speak of. We ran 'em all out after we found out they wouldn't stand by their promises and keep faith with us."

"But don't you think," asked the professor, "that the Communists would be a valuable yeast in such a united front political movement, just to counteract such definitely fascist groups as Long's Share-the-Wealth organization and Father Coughlin's organization?"

"You can't have any kind of a united front with the Communists!" Shoemaker was irritated by such persistence. "A united front to them means doing just what they want to do. You can't trust 'em. Just let one of them in and before you know it he'll be running everything. Anyway, just which one of the dozen-odd brands of Communism in the United States do you mean? As far as the Trotzkyites are concerned, we get along swell with them, but we can't do anything with the other brands."

Harold Ashe, who was candidate for Secretary of State in last fall's elections on the Communist Party ticket, entered the arena.

"You speak of a dozen brands of Communism," he said. "Don't you know that the only organization recognized by the Communist International is the Communist Party of America?"

"Well, yes, but that's connected with Russia. Now I'm in sympathy with Russia, I've made a number of trips there, but we've got to do things differently here in America. Here we can do it by the ballot."

"Then your ultimate aim is Communism?" asked the professor.

"An American form of Communism. As a member of the Socialist Party, I am a follower of Karl Marx."

It became apparent at this stage that Shoemaker was at least getting off the Farmer-Labor "party line," as expounded by Governor Floyd P. Olson of Minnesota, who apparently sees his political movement as the main buttress of the capitalistic system. In THE NEW MASSES of March 5 last, John Strachey quoted as follows from an article Governor Olson contributed to a Minneapolis evening newspaper:

> The significant thing to me was that he [Strachey] devoted most of his attack to the Farmer-Labor program. In so doing he pursued the tactics of all Communists, because the Communist movement regards political movements such as the Farmer-Labor movement as the greatest obstacles to the attainment of the success of their endeavors. They believe that capitalism, whether succeeded by fascism or not, can be overthrown, either peacefully or by violence. But they realize that their most vigorous foes and the foes they will be obliged to finally struggle with, are political movements such as the Farmer-Labor political movement.

Governor Olson apparently does not concur with Mr. Shoemaker that Communism is the ultimate aim. Apparent also is the position of the Progressive Party of Wisconsin, where on April 30 the lower house of the state legislature voted 55 to 34 in favor

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of a bill barring Communists from the ballot in that state.

"Another reason for not having the Communists," continued Shoemaker, "is that they really don't amount to anything anyway. There are only a few thousand of them in the whole country. If we took them in, they would hurt more than they would help, by driving away support. The whole movement would be labeled Communistic, and the American people just can't swallow the word Communism."

"But every organization that opposes capitalism in any form or measure is labeled Communist by the capitalists," objected Ashe. "Whether you want to or not, you are going to have to fight that word. And as a spokesman for the Communist Party, I can assure you that you're not going to get anywhere in California unless you do admit the Communists to your third-party movement. The leadership of the Communist Party is accepted, for example, by tens of thousands of unemployed workers throughout the state and by thousands of members of militant trade unions in California.

"Oh, I've never been a Red-baiter," protested Shoemaker. He then proceeded to state that the third-party movement expected to gain its California support from liberal trade unions, the Epic movement, the Utopian Society and other liberal organizations.

"Even if you go to those organizations," said Ashe, "I can assure you that, whether you want to or not, you will have to deal with Communists. In innumerable liberal and radical organizations throughout California, Communist leadership is looked up to, because in many instances, these groups have been kept alive solely through the efforts of Communists, which by the way refutes your statement that the Communists wreck every organization they go into."

"I'll Fool 'Em."

AT the request of the pacifist hostess, who wanted to know "what we can do out here in California?" Shoemaker deserted this disagreeable phase of the argument to speak further of his third-party movement.

"The only way to attain success for the third party," he said, "is to ignore completely the Communists, have nothing to do with them. The American people are so opposed to the word Communism that any affiliation with them would ruin everything. They would hang a Red slogan on to us and we would be done for.

"The American people are foolable. The capitalists, through the two old-line political parties, have been fooling 'em for years, against their own good.

"I'll fool 'em," said Mr. Shoemaker, with the air of turning a fine phrase, "*for* their own good."

Ah, but these Communists! They're always making trouble. The question bursts forth from a "left" sympathizer: "But what will happen, Mr. Shoemaker, when these people are painted a rosier picture, just to fool 'em, by a fascist leader?"

"Fascism isn't possible in America," he said, stamping down hard on that impertinent question.

"The trouble with you Communists," continued Shoemaker, "is that you're too far in front of the people. They can't even hear what you're saying. *I* will always walk right along with the people and stay just far enough in front of them so that I can always talk to them over my shoulder."

"But suppose," intervenes the "left" supporter again, "suppose that while you are walking along just a little in front of the masses, along comes another demagogue with a little brighter tinsel and gaudier trappings? And suppose, instead of walking, he comes along on a horse and says to the masses, 'I'll not only show the way but I'll give you a horse to ride on'?"

Mr. Shoemaker bristled with indignation.

"Don't try to make this ridiculous!" he stentored. "Fascism and Communism are obsolutely impossible in the United States because of the makeup of the population. Fascism was profitable in Italy and Germany only because they are essentially homogeneous countries as to nationality. But America—why, America is the melting pot of the world!"

As to Communism's possibility in the United States, Shoemaker neglected to point out the heterogeneous national character of the U.S.S.R., but the argument swept on to a new tangent.

Hurrying for Hormel

"LET me tell you a story," Shoemaker said, "about how the Farmer-Labor Party up in Minnesota functioned during a critical strike period. The strike was by the Independent movement in the Hormel Meat Packing Company plant at Austin, Minn.

"The strike was organized 100 percent. The boys just took possession of the plant, turned off the entire refrigeration system, and ran everybody out of the plant. They went into the manager's office and when he said, 'You can't run me out of my own office,' they said, 'Oh, yeah' and tossed him out of the window. And they didn't stop to open the window."

At this point one of the professors interrupted: "Sounds like direct action!"

"They locked up the gates to the plant," continued Shoemaker, "and then posted pickets to keep everybody out. The town was all for the strike. Even when Governor Olson came to Austin, they booed him and practically ran him out of town.

"When I got to Austin several days after the strike began, the situation was critical. Within six hours, the million-dollar refrigeration system would have been completely shot and millions of dollars worth of meat, including several millions of U. S. government meat, would have spoiled. Hormel and his executives had locked themselves in a bank, and even had rifles to defend themselves. I had just talked to Washington and knew they were about to send in federal troops.

"So I went to see Hormel, and he pleaded with me to get the refrigeration system started. I said, 'Hormel, are you willing to give the boys what they want, ten cents an hour increase?' He said, 'Yes, for all except those getting sixty-five cents an hour or better, but get that refrigeration system started and then we can talk business.' Well, I went out and sold the boys on that basis and in twenty minutes I was back in the bank to get Hormel's refrigeration engineer. He said, 'What kept you so long?' We got the refrigeration system started and the boys went back to work under that agreement."

Shoemaker laughed in appreciation of his own strategy, but the Communist influence again disturbed his equilibrium.

"But what about the workers who were getting over sixty-five cents an hour and who were sold out on their demand for an increase?"

"Most of the employees, probably 90 percent or so, got the raise."

"And the others couldn't have held out for their demands if they had wanted to?" commented Ashe.

But Shoemaker swept on to a new phase.

"Let me tell you about the agreement I worked out with Hormel for the union just a few weeks ago at Palm Springs," he said. (Palm Springs is a California desert resort for millionaires.)

"Hormel agreed to pay all his men for a full six days a week, regardless of whether they only actually worked three days. This agreement will last until 1940. If business picks up before that time, they are to work overtime without pay for the number of hours they were paid for without working. I got Hormel to sign this agreement and then we had a couple of highballs just to celebrate."

"In other words, Mr. Shoemaker," interposed Ashe with disturbing irony, "you mortgaged the worker until 1940."

Shoemaker did not deign to reply.

Rough and Tumble

AT this juncture a college professor, whose economic insecurity had led him to follow Upton Sinclair in last fall's gubernatorial election to his own ultimate disillusion, expressed dissatisfaction with Shoemaker's previous touting of the ballot as the only essential weapon for social change.

"We in California," he said, "learned a valuable lesson last fall. We learned that capitalism when actually threatened with the imminent rise to political power of a party, even such as Sinclair's Epic movement with its comparatively mild program of social change, that capitalism will do everything in its power to defeat such a possibility. In Sinclair's case, vicious propaganda and the intimidation of voters by attempting to disenfranchise several hundred thousand voters, were the most violent methods used, but we

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fully anticipate that the next time, if capitalism thinks it necessary, we will be met with bayonets. What about that, Mr. Shoemaker?"

"Well," said Shoemaker, "if it comes to that, I'm willing to take a bayonet."

"Where, Mr. Shoemaker," asked the professor, "in the belly?"

When the laughter subsided, Shoemaker said rather diffidently, "I mean I'm willing to fight then."

"It will be too late!" chorused the left wing of the argument.

"When that time comes, Mr. Shoemaker, we'll have fascism right on our necks," said Ashe. "The only thing to do is to warn the workers right now of that probability and to prepare them to cope with it when it comes."

At this distinctly embarrassing moment of the soiree, Mr. Shoemaker was rescued by the tactful invitation of his hostess to a buffet supper. General discussion was over, but sporadic argument, punctuated by coffee and sandwiches, continued.

During the course of the evening, Shoemaker made this statement, illuminating in connection with his announced intention to "fool 'em": "Of course, you understand that I won't tell all these things when I speak at my mass meeting tomorrow afternoon at the Hollywood Bowl."

True to his word, he did not mention "all these things" at his mass meeting.

The Bowl event was sponsored by the National Economic Congress, a "crackpot" organization of potential fascist tinder, which promulgates the theory that the economic ills can be cured by revision of the monetary system to what they call "dated money." Sherman J. Bainbridge, executive of the congress, told the crowd of some 4,000 that their presence was "proof of your loyal Americanism with deep-seated confidence in the government." He also revealed that identical meetings were being held in Detroit, with Father Coughlin, Senator Nye of North Dakota and Senator Thomas of Oklahoma, as speakers, and in Des Moines, Iowa, with Governor Olson and Huey Long as speakers.

Taps on Three Wrists

Significant was the fact that Shoemaker delivered his two-hour speech entirely extemporaneously, save for one section which he read, indicating that the previous evening had awakened his political acumen to the fact that playing with the evanescent nominal leadership of these organizations was futile. This section of his speech read:

"Before I came on the stage, someone stopped me and said, 'I hope you are not falling for fakirs like Huey Long, Father Coughlin and Dr. Townsend.' I was asked to state my position in regard to these worthy gentlemen, and I give credit to them for their sincerity.

"To Huey Long, I say, that your plan of every man a king is okay, provided you are willing to abolish the Kingfish of Kale. But are you, Mr. Long? Incomes of $2,500 yearly per family can easily be obtained, but not under the profit system. Mr. Long, are you for or against the profit system?

"To Father Coughlin, I say, your denunciations of banks and banksters are sweet music to my ears, but are you willing to change the system where bankers rule the roost to a system where no bankers are allowed on the roost?

"To Dr. Townsend, I say, that old age pensions are feasible and your movement has my sympathy, but it can't be worked by robbing Peter who works part-time, for Paul, too-old-to-work.

"To all three of you, individually and collectively, let me say, gentlemen, you have the rods, the sinkers and the bait, but as long as you don't produce the hooks to snag the fish, why you just ain't talking sense."

Testimony as to the effectiveness of his demagagic tactics was the manner in which he swung the crowd, which had enthusiastically applauded reference by previous speakers to Father Coughlin and Huey Long, to the position where they just as enthusiastically applauded his mild questionings of these same "gentlemen."

Equally effective was his politic attack on Upton Sinclair, who now dreams nightly of capturing the national Democratic Party. In this supposed stronghold of Sinclair, Shoemaker accomplished this strategic attack without in any way alienating his audience.

In all fairness to Mr. Shoemaker, it must be stated that he is an infinitely superior demagogue to Mr. Sinclair or any of the other self-appointed leaders of the masses on the California scene. It is quite possible that he may be able to develop a considerable following in California for his third-party movement, which must inevitably lead the masses into the same *cul de sac* that the German workers were led into by the Social Democracy, a position which will strengthen the possibility of fascism in the United States. On the other hand, it is very unlikely that such a third party will gain the degree of mass support that Upton Sinclair momentarily obtained for his gubernatorial campaign. The California situation has taken a healthier turn the last six months, and the masses no longer respond with fanatic zeal to the would-be demagogues and their organizations controlled from the top. Rank-and-file control is the increasingly heard demand of the California workers and farmers.

The seeds of a genuine Labor Party based upon the trade unions and organizations containing the exploited—of *all* political shadings including the Communists—are present in California, ready to grow into a body that will truly represent the demands of the working class.

What Is Communism?

How the Communist Party Works

EARL BROWDER

IT IS now time to give attention to a flood of questions from our readers relating to the Communist Party and how it works. We quote representative questions from a variety of letters:

> **Does the Communist Party takes orders from Moscow? . . . How is the leadership of the Party chosen? . . . What is the Third International and how does it work? . . . Is the Communist Party supported by Moscow gold? . . . Who is eligible to membership in the Communist Party? . . . What is the size of the Communist Party and how fast is it growing? . . . Why doesn't it grow faster?**

No, the Communist Party does not "take orders" from Moscow. The very placing of such a question becomes absurd when we remember that a political party, even so small as the C.P. still is, can live and grow only to the extent that it directly represents, leads and organizes the struggle for the needs of the masses whom it would win.

The Communist Party is the modern continuation of the revolutionary socialist movement, which has a continuous history of organization of fifty-five or sixty years. It has gathered into itself all that is healthy of the formerly scattered and split revolutionary trends and currents from the Socialist Party, the Socialist-Labor Party, the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) and even the proletarian elements of the former anarchist movement. But it has brought them together, not as a loose federation of groupings, each retaining its old ideas, but by a drastic remolding and remaking of them all, melting them down and recasting them into the single mold of a unified, uniform party.

This Communist Party is organized on the principle of *democratic-centralism.* That

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means, that the leadership of the party is elected from below, from the membership units of the party, in a delegated party convention, which is the supreme authority of the party. The convention adopts the program and elects a Central Committee, which exercises full power of direction of the party between conventions. Below the Central Committee, and subordinated to it, are some twenty-seven District Committees, elected by District Conventions; the Districts are similarly subdivided into Sections; the Section Committees are based directly upon the membership units (or nuclei).

This system of democratic-centralism accomplishes two vital aims of Communist organizations; it achieves a united party, motivated by a uniform strategy and tactic, uniting thousands of wills into a single will, concentrating into one great proletarian fist that multitude of individual forces that would otherwise cancel one another in disunity and confusion; and secondly, it achieves this not by blotting out the individual participation and initiative, but by broadening and deepening inner democracy, by *organizing* it.

The Communist Party of the United States is, in turn, united with the parties of all other countries (about sixty of them) into a World Party, organized on the same principles. This is the Communist International (sometimes called Comintern, for short), headed by its Executive Committee (E.C.C.I.), elected at the World Congress. The Communist International is also known as the Third International, to designate its lineal descent from the International Workingmen's Association or First International, founded by Marx and Engels, and the Second or Socialist International, which continued the tradition of Marx until the World War, when it collapsed.

That hoary old legend of "Moscow gold," which the Hearsts of all lands constantly repeat, is only an effort to hide the fact that Communist Parties grow naturally out of the class struggle in each country. They would like the masses to believe that Communist Parties are mercenaries, bribed and bought by the Moscow Bolsheviks to "make trouble" in the capitalist countries.

No, the C.P.U.S.A. receives no "Moscow gold." Its finances come from the workers and sympathizers in this country. But that is not to deny that Communists send money from one country to another to help those who are in the most difficult positions. For example, the C.P.U.S.A. itself pays "international dues," which it collects from its members, amounting to about $20,000 per year, and of which about 80 percent goes to help the Communist Parties of Germany, Ireland, Cuba, Philippine Islands, Canada and Porto Rico. During 1934, the C.P.U.S.A. sent over $12,000 to the German Party. The C.P.U.S.A. gets no financial help from the outside, because it is still working under what is comparatively the most favorable conditions, opportunities for open work, etc., but must itself help the others, especially in fascist and colonial countries. Such amounts spent on international solidarity are comparatively small, but politically are of great importance. They serve to emphasize and give concrete weight to our conception of a World Party, the embodiment of the stirring Marxian slogan, "Workers of all lands, unite!"

Any man or woman is eligible to membership in the Communist Party who subscribes to its program, who actively participates in its work under the direction of the party organization and who subordinates himself to the party decisions.

Growth of the C.P.U.S.A. for the past six years is shown by the following approximate average dues payments. (Members pay dues each week on a graduated scale, beginning at two cents for unemployed, ten to twenty-five cents for those with incomes up to $25, two percent for those with incomes of $25 and above, with higher assessments on incomes over $50).

Average membership in 1930, 7,000; in 1931, 9,000; in 1932, 14,000; in 1933, 18,000; in 1934, 26,000; in 1935, 30,000.

Membership in mass organizations of various kinds, not affiliated to the party but in general sympathy with its program on the main issues of the day, numbers about 600,000. Hamilton Fish, the Red-baiting Congressman, recently estimated that this figure should be 1,200,000, but he does not use such strict organizational standards for his judgment as do the Communists. We have no interest in over-estimating our own strength. On special issues, such as the campaign for the Workers' Unemployment, Old-age and Social Insurance Bill, H.R. 2827, we have associated with us in the broad united front on this single issue about 5,000,000 of the membership of various organizations.

Is the Communist Party satisfied with this growth? No, not by any means, no more than our questioner who impatiently asks "Why doesn't the party grow faster?" We are constantly studying the problem, and in part beginning to solve it, of how to become a mass party.

But in solving this problem, we know that the suggestions of many of our correspondents that we copy the methods of Huey Long and Father Coughlin, will not help us. These correspondents are impressed with the huge claims of ten or more million members in the Share-Our-Wealth Clubs and the Union for Social Justice and would like to see us making similar claims. We, however, could not obtain any comfort from such a "membership" even though we counted it in millions. These demagogues have a following almost, if not quite, unorganized; we dare not fool ourselves by claiming the strength of unorganized following for our strength comes only from organization capable of action and struggle. They get their following by irresponsible promises of all things to all men; we can promise nothing but mass struggle and the fruits of mass struggle, based upon a realistic program which we can and will actually carry out when the masses are behind us. They obtain enormous financial backing from capitalists, by using their mass influence demagogically obtained, for special capitalist interests; we can win from the capitalists only their undying hatred and ever fiercer suppression, and must rely for finances upon the poverty-stricken workers, with a trickle of funds from middle-class sympathizers. The half-fascist demagogues cannot teach anything of value to us by their type of "organization"; if they should ever come to really serious mass organization in the U.S., it will be they who are copying us and not we them.

The Communist Party is, however, driving toward a more rapid growth, with the ambition of becoming in this period a real mass party. We will not consider that a serious beginning has been consolidated until we have 100,000 members. That is the next goal we are striving toward.

How will we get there?

Chiefly, and before all, by making the Communist Party known to the millions of toilers as the best fighter for their immediate interests. Examples of how we do this are the campaign for the Workers' Bill, leadership of the struggles of the unemployed, strike leadership (best recent example being the Pacific Coast marine and San Francisco General Strike) and similar work in every field of mass endeavor. We take pride in the unwilling testimonials of our enemies that we are becoming successful in this field. For example, Fortune magazine recently, in an article on the Communist Party, concluded an article replete with inaccuracies and misinformation with the following sound observation:

> Not long ago a government official toured the country, penniless and clothed in tatters, to see for himself how unemployment relief was being handled. He learned a great deal. "Even the Communists taught me something," he told reporters. "I learned the power that the Communists have is gained principally because they will listen to people who are down and out and will work for them and fight for them."

That is true. But it is only part of the truth. The Communists do something else, without which we could never have become as much of a power as we have and without which we can never move forward seriously. That something else is that we always and everywhere give these immediate struggles a higher goal than the mere winning of the demands of the moment. We fight to win these demands, certainly, but we fight even better and more uncompromisingly because at the same time we show the workers how, by building ever stronger class organizations for this fight, we are preparing for bigger fights that can end only by the final defeat of the capitalists and the establishing of the workers in full power in the state. We give the workers the visions of the socialist society and show them the road to attaining it. We

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rally around the workers all other oppressed people and all those intelligent enough to cast in their lot with the future.

It is as a part of this last and most important task, in the building of the mass Communist Party, that this series of articles on "What is Communism?" gains whatever significance it may have.

In his eighth article, next week, Earl Browder will discuss "Americanism—Who Are the Americans?"—THE EDITORS.

Questions from Readers

EARL BROWDER

(Replacing for this week the "Question and Answers" are some representative discussion letters and brief comments thereon.)

The Lawyers Are Doomed

Earl Browder,
c/o NEW MASSES

Although I am a member of the legal profession and for that reason alone, if for no other, I should fight tooth and nail to perpetuate or at least prolong the status quo, I cannot but see the handwriting on the wall pointing unmistakably to the inevitable doom of the capitalist system.

But you seem to hold out no hope for the lawyers. You say in your fifth article on Communism: "The only group in this series we can hold out very little hope for is the lawyers. God only knows what they will be good for in a socialist society."

In the legal profession there has always been a small group who serve the very rich and a larger group who cater to the middle class, the smaller business man. The means of livelihood of the average lawyer were derived from the middle-class business men. While the capitalist system was functioning, when business was booming, when the butcher, the baker, the grocer, the tailor were buying real estate, investing in mortgages, in building operations, etc., there was business for the average lawyer and he had no difficulty in making a living. With the coming of the era of combinations, consolidations and mergers, resulting in the concentration of huge wealth in the hands of the few big bankers and industrialists, there was inaugurated a process of elimination—the elimination of the smaller business man from the field. 1929 and the years following gave that process of elimination a big push. Equities and investments in real estate and in mortgages, stocks and bonds were wiped out and thousands upon thousands of small business men were impoverished and made bankrupt, with the result that at this time we find on the one hand a small group of lawyers, those on top serving the big bankers, the big industrialists, large wealth and reaping a harvest beyond their fondest dreams and imaginations; on the other side, there is that larger group of lawyers who formerly catered to the middle class, the smaller business man, but who, today, are without business, without any source of income, due to the impoverishment and bankruptcy of the smaller business man. There are today thousands of lawyers whose existence is more precarious, more hopeless and helpless than that of the unemployed. Why then, could not this group find itself in a new society and fit into it so as to become useful? A READER.

Comment: Our legal friend didn't quite get our point. We were not condemning those persons, now unfortunately lawyers, to be eliminated from participation in a socialist society—we spoke of the elimination of the *legal profession.* Certainly there will be no use for lawyers, as such, under socialism. This is in sharp contrast to other professions, such as engineers, technicians, doctors, etc., whose profession, far from being injured by a socialist revolution, will only begin to bloom and expand under socialism. For the lawyers, we can only promise the opportunity of re-education to become useful citizens in some other capacity. In the meanwhile, so long as capitalism exists, even lawyers can make themselves useful in their professional capacity. The International Labor Defense has around it hundreds of excellent lawyers, who give their services self-sacrificingly; their efforts are highly appreciated. But even this cannot win any perspective for the legal profession, as such, after the revolution. It is a doomed profession.

Exploiters Who Are Exploited

Earl Browder,
c/o NEW MASSES

Your article on the relation of the middle class to the revolution is excellent, as far as it goes. But I feel that it is not complete. You (and other writers on the revolutionary potentialities of the middle class) neglect a group of the petit bourgeoisie which is quite numerous and important, particularly in New York City, and which has an especially difficult problem to face in connection with its political and economic alignments. I refer to the small manufacturers or contractors, men who exploit workers, but who are themselves exploited under the capitalist system.

I know several such men rather well. One of them employs about forty people. Needless to say, he works them as hard as he can and pays them as little as he can. Nevertheless, he is making no fortune. On the one hand, the bigger concerns in his field reduce his gross receipts by employing price-cutting tactics and offering services with which he can hardly compete. On the other hand, the workers raise his expenses by organizing for shorter hours and higher wages.

He himself works very hard. An intelligent and alert individual, he does all the buying and selling for his enterprise, takes care of all correspondence, writes and inserts advertisements in various trade journals, plans in detail all the products he manufactures and supervises the filling of all orders.

A forty-hour week is something which he dreams of but is unable to achieve personally. He never works less than 10 hours a day, six days a week. In his busy season, it is not unusual for him to leave his home at five in the morning and return at midnight. A vacation in the summer (or at any other time, for that matter) is simply out of the question.

The income he draws from his business is a sum which is insufficient to secure for his family a great many things which every worker would have in a socialist society. Proper medical and dental attention, college educations for his children, adequate recreation and vacation facilities, are things which he cannot possibly give his family without skimping on necessary allotments for food, clothing and housing. He himself is in need of a minor operation which would incapacitate him for several weeks. But he has neither the time nor the money to give his ailment the attention it requires.

In addition, his present source of income is extremely insecure. The activities of large competing organizations and of a strong union threaten daily to crush his enterprise. There is only one practicable way for this man to save his business organization and even such salvation is only temporary. That way is to fight the union. And that is just what he does.

At this point, it is necessary to emphasize that the individual in question is well aware of the nature and implications of the class struggle. He traces the progress in the U.S.S.R. with enthusiasm and, theoretically, is in favor of Communism. But, by virtue of his position, it is impossible for him to put his theories into practice.

To make his acts consistent with his ideas, this individual should, of course, give up his business enterprise at once. However, he has no other source of income and no other resources on which to fall back. Present conditions make it seem highly improbable that he would be able to get a job in private industry. And even if he did get a job, his earnings would be so small that his level of living would immediately fall sharply. His family would experience privations and want.

So the man uncomfortably tries to rationalize his actions and justify his practices. But such rationalization does not solve his problem. Eventually, of course, the intensification of the class struggle and the crystallization of the classes will force most of the small business enterprises out of existence and the path of such individuals wil be clear. But in the meantime what are they to do? J. DAVIS.

Comment: This correspondent has given an indication of the tragic situation of the small "capitalist," who is in reality only a slave-driver on a commission basis for the real capitalist. The same arguments could, with small change, fit the case of an intelligent policeman asigned to strike duty, hating his work, but determined to support his family in their accustomed manner. It is very difficult to give any helpful advice to such individuals and groups. Their situation is tragic because there is no solution, except that provided by the inexorable conclusions of capitalist decay and the final victory of the working class.

Whose Bill Is H. R. 2827?

Earl Browder,
c/o NEW MASSES

I have been an avid follower of your series of articles in THE NEW MASSES. For the benefit of my Farmer-Labor acquaintances, will you please clear up the question of who formulated the Workers Bill, H.R. 2827, sometimes known as the Lundeen bill? Ernest Lundeen being a Farmer-Laborite, it has been repeated quite frequently that the Farmer-Labor Party must take credit for originating the bill.

I would like to have full information on this question, published in THE NEW MASSES if possible.

BEN C. HAGGLUND.

Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

Comment: Mr. Lundeen is entitled to full credit for introducing and fighting for H.R. 2827, but his Party has not been active in this regard and did not originate the Bill. On this question of whose bill it is, I spoke at the Unemployment Congress in Washington, January 6, 1935, as follows:

> It is true that the Communist Party worked out this Bill, after prolonged consultation with large numbers of workers, popularized it and brought millions of Americans to see this Bill as the only proposal for unemployment insurance that meets their life needs. But that is not an argument against the Bill; that is only a recommendation for the Communist Party—for which we thank Mr. Green most kindly even though his intentions were not friendly. We Communists have no desire to keep this Bill as "our own" private property; we have tried to make it the common property of all the toiling masses; we have tried to bring every organization of workers (and also of farmers and middle classes) to look upon this Bill as "their own." Thousands of A. F. of L. locals, scores of Socialist Party organizations, dozens of Farmer-Labor Party locals, claim the Bill as theirs. That is good, that is splendid; the Communist Party, far from disputing title to the Bill with anyone, agrees with everyone who claims the Bill. We are ready to support any better proposal, no matter who should make it. Of course the Bill is yours; it belongs to the entire working class, to all the toiling masses of America. In this fact we find our greatest triumph.

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The Timid Profession

GRANVILLE HICKS

A FEW WEEKS AGO, before the fact of my dismissal was generally known, a member of the faculty of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute—I have no idea who it was—stated at a regional conference of the American Association of University Professors that the teachers at R.P.I. did not dare form a chapter of the Association because they were in constant dread of the administration. Imagine it—afraid to form a chapter of the most respectable, the most cautious, the most professorial of all the teachers' organizations! If that was how my colleagues felt before they knew what had happened to me, it is easy to understand why so many of them now look like bookkeepers who have been caught in petty larcenies and reprieved by a merciful employer.

It is no wonder that many professors are far from happy. I know one man who admits to friends that, whenever he is in a social gathering, he has to have two or three drinks because sober he cannot endure the necessary denial of all that he really believes. I know another who, a few years ago, cultivated a reputation as an iconoclast, not a radical but a Mencken-worshipper, a scoffer at the sanctities. The bait of the chairmanship of a department was dangled before him and he began to curb his tongue, join clubs, sit on committees. I do not think he likes it, and he hasn't yet been given his just reward. There is a third, perhaps the only conscious hypocrite of my acquaintance. Not long ago he posed as a radical; the other day, in the presence of men of influence, he remarked that it was a damn good thing to deport John Strachey.

Everyone knows why teachers are afraid to say what they think. One has only to read Upton Sinclair's *The Goose Step* to see the stranglehold that capitalism has on education. It is only necessary, indeed, to glance at the list of trustees of any college in the country. But capitalism's grip on the colleges is dangerous not only because it can and occasionally does use its power to dismiss radicals; the tragedy is that that power so seldom has to be used. The security of capitalism lies less in its ability to oust its critics than in the completeness with which the teaching profession has been tamed.

The principal defense of capitalism in the colleges is what is called the academic mind. Professors have cultivated the notion that finding the truth and taking sides are incompatible. To the unitiated it would seem that the principal reason for looking for truth was to be able to act. Teachers, however, pride themselves on remaining objective, on being impartial, on suspending judgment, on looking at both sides—they have many nice phrases for it. And they continue to do nothing until the time for action has passed, apparently never realizing that their inactivity has been a positive aid to the status quo, that they actually have taken sides, have lent their support as definitely and irretrievably as the most bigoted partisans. Professors believe, as Harry Elmer Barnes once remarked, that five percent of overstatement is a cardinal sin and fifty percent of understatement a virtue. They believe that it is better to countenance a hundred evils than to make one error of fact or offend the least cannon of good taste.

The academic mind is an achievement, not a gift, but it is an achievement which our whole educational system fosters. A young man, reasonably idealistic, starts out to become a teacher. He is soon told that the degree of doctor of philosophy is practically a prerequisite for promotion and even, in these days of retrenchment, for a start as instructor. No one believes that the Ph.D. makes a man a better teacher. College presidents say with confidential cynicism that Ph.D.'s look well in the college catalogue. Heads of graduate schools admit in candid moments that the doctoral requirements are useful chiefly as a means of limiting the number of men in a crowded profession.

Of course, the young man may survive the doctorate, may emerge from the years of arduous and meaningless discipline without having lost his eagerness for knowledge and his belief in the importance of education. I have known three or four educational men who did so. They were intelligent enough to pass the required courses without wasting much time on investigating subjects that actually interested them. They had to fight every step of the way and, if they had been any less able than they were, they would have been beaten. It almost goes without saying that every one of them hates the Ph.D. and all it stands for.

When a man takes his first instructorship, he has, unless his graduate work has already sapped away every bit of imagination and courage, ideas about teaching. He remembers how badly, for the most part, he was taught, how little his education did for him. He wants to make his subject come alive for his students and he thinks he knows how to do it. Then he discovers, unless he is very fortunate, that his courses are all prescribed for him, the textbooks chosen, perhaps a syllabus prepared. In any case there are traditions that govern his courses, traditions, he soon learns, that cannot safely be violated. His plans for the teaching of his subject would disrupt the bookkeeping system: he could not have the right kind of examinations or get the right kind of grades. He is part of a machine for the recording of marks and new ideas are regarded as sabotage.

The young instructor also learns that, strange as it appears to him, nobody cares much whether he teaches badly or well. He may be able to interest his students in his subject, stimulate their imaginations, awaken their minds. His own satisfaction will be his sole reward. Promotion depends chiefly on productivity. Scholarly articles in the learned journals and eventually scholarly books are the steps to professorial standing. To produce he must often neglect his teaching. If he happens to be a scholar by nature, he will not mind and he may even find it possible to do a little valuable work. But if he is a teacher rather than a scholar, he will be unhappy. He will see stupid, heavy colleagues, capable only of cramming soon-forgotten facts into bored young heads, getting promoted because they tabulate the figures of speech in *Paradise Lost* or edit the manuscripts of a sixth-rate statesman. Having learned in graduate school that what passes for scholarship is two-thirds diligence and one-third lack of discrimination, he may well decide that it is easier to conform than to fight.

Conformity becomes, indeed, the rule of the instructor's life. It is true that, for all the restrictions imposed upon his courses, he can do more nearly as he pleases than the employe of a business firm can and, if he rises in rank, his freedom in the classroom grows greater. But outside of working hours he is less free than the lowest Wall Street clerk. There are colleges that require their teachers to sign an agreement not to drink or smoke, to go to church, even to teach Sunday school. Here in the East we feel superior to such institutions. But there is not an instructor in the country, I suspect, who has not been given friendly advice about the right clubs, the right churches, the right associates. There is no compulsion, of course, in our more enlightened colleges, but there is a good deal of talk about cooperation and the cooperative instructor gets ahead. A cooperative wife is also a help.

Indeed, next to productivity, nothing helps so much to win promotion as what is called playing the game. At various times ex-professors have written more or less autobiographical novels and they have all described the petty jealousies and intrigues of academic life. It is, as a matter of fact, almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of social alliances and campus cliques in the achievement of professorial advancement. No novelist has quite done justice to the nicety with which the timid academician can, on occasion, cut a throat or stab a back. I have seen eight men, members of the same department, constant visitors in each other's offices, sharers of the same social life, sitting around a departmental table and each eyeing the others with the most obvious distrust. They were not united in the pursuit of knowledge; they were separated in the pursuit of position.

It is in such an environment that the academic mind develops. Fundamentally the academic mind is a response to the meaninglessness of education. For one hundred years Americans have been taught to place their hopes of personal and social salvation in the educational system. But education under conditions of finance capitalism has

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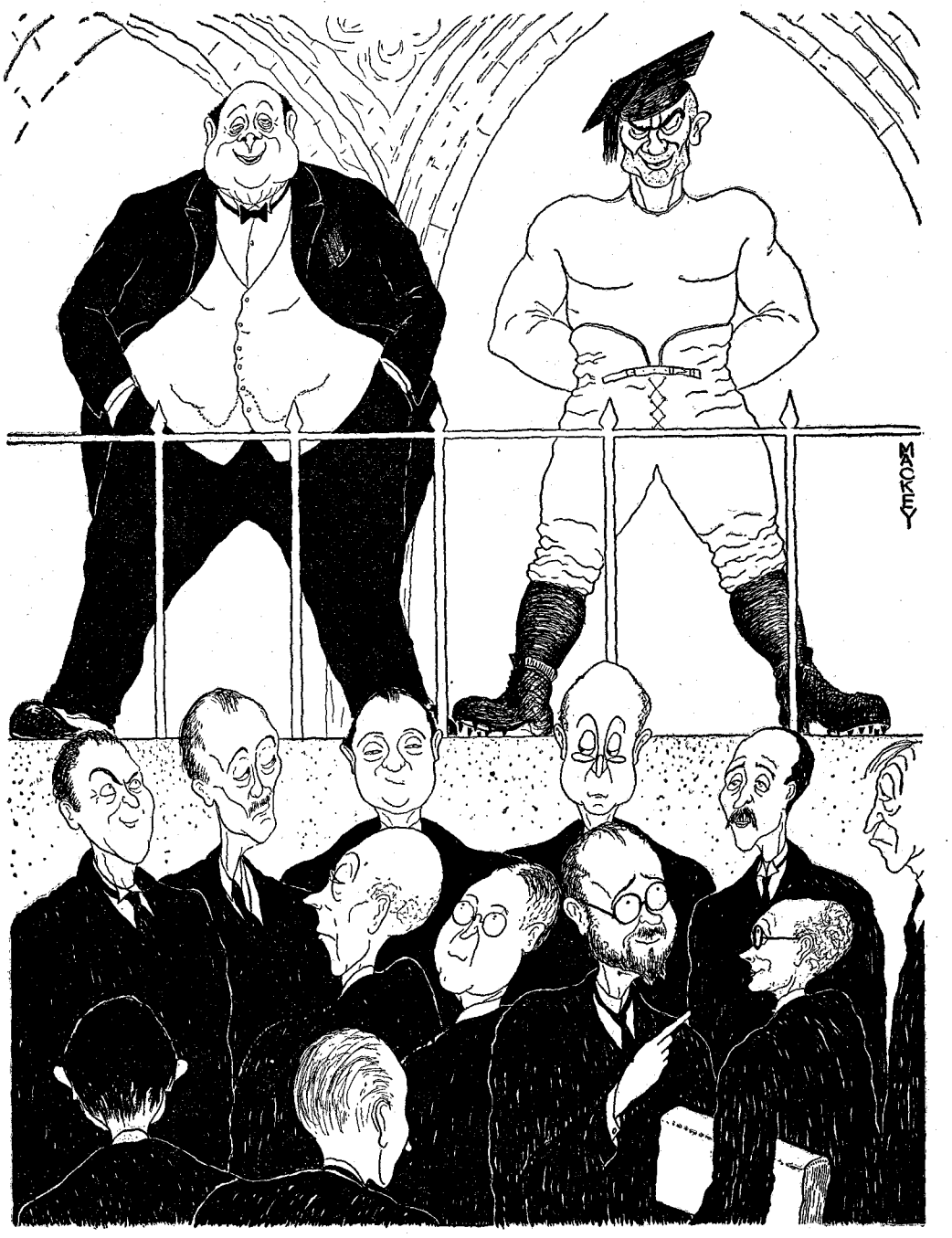
little enough to offer either individual or society. Today it is reported that one-third of all college graduates cannot get jobs and that another third have to take jobs other than those for which they have been trained. College administrators, knowing these facts, nevertheless use ballyhoo and super-salesmanship to keep up their enrollments. The same forces lower college standards and raise standards of admission into the professions.

But the meaninglessness of education antedates the depression. The engineering school, as I have reason to know, does only reasonably well in training men for jobs and does nothing to prepare them for citizenship. The liberal-arts college gives its students no vocational training and does distressingly little to help them to become better citizens. The liberal-arts college is supposed to enable its students to live richer lives because of their appreciation of art and literature, to make them more reflective, to lead to a knowledge of the past and a critical understanding of the present. Unfortunately it almost completely fails to do these things. So many of the values of art and philosophy are denied by the mores of a competitive society, so much of the history of the past is obscured by capitalist apologetics, so many phases of government and economics point to capitalism's bankruptcy, that the liberal-arts college, dominated as it is by the interests of the business men who support it, can only inculcate a sham culture.

It is no wonder that the academic mind develops. It is the professor's only defense. Teaching is a profession peculiarly dedicated to the discovery and dissemination of truth. But there are so many truths that cannot be taught! I have heard teachers joke about "safe" subjects to teach. There aren't any. Economics and history have always been dangerous. Literature is now definitely a controversial subject. Even science has its embarrassing questions. I remember one of the jesting professors saying that, outside of Tennessee, biology was safe. This very man has recently been involved in some controversy over Nazi theories of sterilization.



THE HIRE LEARNING *Mackey*

The situation of the young instructor is peculiarly difficult. His position is not protected. He can be released for any of a dozen reasons or for none. The authorities do not even have to admit to themselves that non-conformity was the reason for his dismissal; they can say to themselves that he was non-cooperative, wasn't making the best use of his opportunities, didn't give promise of being the kind of man that they like to see get ahead. All he can do is keep his mouth shut until he has achieved professorial standing and permanent tenure. By that time keeping his mouth shut is a habit.

Pity the poor professor! He is hired to tell the truth; he has to listen to baccalaureate sermons and commencement addresses in which his devotion to truth is justified; and yet he knows that truth-telling is almost certain to be fatal to his career. Or, rather, he doesn't know; he won't admit it. He accepts the stereotype that years of academic dodging have perfected; he develops the academic mind. Often he comes, as members of kept professions so often do, to relish his slavery. He is glad of his lack of responsibility, proud of his indecisiveness. He will not defend his rights for he has forgotten that he has rights.

Of course I exaggerate. There are teachers' organizations, some of them not wholly lacking in militancy. Dozens of teachers have publicly come to my defense. There are many radicals on college faculties and there are teachers who, though they have not yet realized the full power of business over education, do take seriously their professed principles and are willing to do battle on their behalf. A certain amount of idealism has survived the dessicating experiences of graduate study and instructorial apprenticeship. This idealism, moreover, is being reinforced by a very practical realization of the economic insecurity of the profession. Thought is not wholly dead in the colleges—otherwise Mr. Hearst would not be so worried.

But the individual teacher is almost helpless. Mr. Jarrett, the man responsible for my dismissal, is reported to have said with some glee that I was a marked man and would never get another job. Fortunately I have a reasonable chance of earning a living outside the profession. The average teacher who opposes the established authorities commits economic suicide. Nothing will serve but organization. Not merely academic freedom is at stake but bread and butter as well. I cannot discuss at this point the teachers' organizations that exist, but it is obvious that, if they are to amount to anything, power must be wrested from the hands of the timid old men who now control them. Conditions in education, if left to themselves, are not going to become better but worse. If teachers do not want to be reduced to a nauseating, boot-licking slavery, they had better start organizing now.

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The Red Belt Around Paris

ANDRÉ RIBARD

For weeks the papers have carried news of financial crisis in France and the toppling of cabinets. Laval emerges with semi-dictatorial powers aimed at saving the country from financial collapse. The real factor behind the insecurity of French politicians is the united front, called the "Front Populaire," which won sweeping electoral victories for the workers on May 12. Formed last year on the initiative of the Communist Party of France, the "Front Populaire" has united under the anti-fascist banner the Socialist and Communist Parties, the Pupistes (Communist Opposition), some Independent Radicals and Republican Socialists and some Radical Socialists and other groups. In less than a year it has changed the current of political history in France. The results of the recent elections, sent us by a correspondent in Paris may be summarized as follows:

Three factors stand out: (1) The progress made by the Communist Party; (2) The success of the united front against fascism; and (3) the election of Prof. Rivet, one of France's outstanding intellectual leaders and chairman of the Intellectuals' Vigilance Committee Against Fascism.

Consulting the official tables which we reproduce below, giving results for 858 communes of over 5,000 inhabitants each, the reader will observe that the Communist Party made net gains of exactly 100 percent. But these tables do not tell the whole story. No distinction is made between the larger and smaller communes of over 5,000. They do not indicate that the Party gained Colombes (57,000), Velleurbanne (65,000) and a number of other cities of importance; nor that the nine "losses" of the party did not include such outstanding places as Argenteuil (70,600). Again, the statistics do not show the great progress made by the Communists in towns of less than 5,000 and Paris itself. Before the elections there was one Communist on the Paris municipal council. There are now eight. Although this is less than 10 percent of the total Council (90), the Party polled 20 percent of the Paris votes. The electoral system of Paris is notoriously undemocratic; less than 45 percent of the voters elected the reactionary councillors forming 60 percent of the body. Finally in the Paris region (including the city and its suburbs) with nearly 5,000,000 inhabitants, the Communist Party emerged as the strongest single party. It polled 235,000 votes there, or 30 percent of the total of 760,000. Before the elections it controlled nine suburban municipalities. Today it will administer twenty-seven, comprising more than a third of the suburban population; and the united anti-fascist front won fifty-five suburban municipalities forming a "Red Belt" around Paris. Opposed to the "Front Populaire" was the bloc of Right parties forming the "Union Nationale," all basically fascist. Had the "Front Populaire" kept the "Union Nationale" from advancing it would have been a victory. But the united front accomplished far more; it imposed positive losses on its adversaries. It achieved positive gains for itself. We publish below an analysis of the fundamental issues behind the election results, by one of the leading French political writers of the Left.

	Number won	*Gross gains*	*Gross losses*	*Net gains*	*Net losses*
(United Front)					
Communists	86	52	9	43	
Pupistes and Doriotistes	5	0	1		1
Socialists	169	33	39		6
Neo-Socialists	15	3	4		1
Independent Socialists	3	1	3		2
Republican Socialists	33	8	17		9
Independent Radicals	51	16	20		4
Radical Socialists	222	57	61		4
(Union Nationale)					
Left Republicans	146	41	51		10
United Republicans	103	24	35		11
Popular Democrats	9	4	4	0	0
Conservatives	10	2	1	1	
Doubtful (as of May 15)	6		1		

PARIS.

FOR a century capitalism has made of the French municipalities mere branch offices of its industrial and commercial enterprises. On the pretext of competence and technical ability, the bourgeois capitalist has been the appointed administrator of the business of the city, to better strengthen his own business. The administrative myth supplemented the democratic myth.

Now, however, on the morrow of such searching examinations as those of May 5 and May 12, the capitalist system finds it imperative to overturn its own constitutional forms. It must find new social myths; there capitalism interferes with the laws which tend subtly to support the direction of the social struggle and provide for democratic liberties.

Opposing this offensive brutally carried out by capitalism, the united front marks the first defensive stand of the workers. The origin of the united front is the reintegration of the classes which capitalism for a century has been busy splitting and scattering. But the reintegration was taking place without their knowing it. All that was needed to make manifest the realization of it was the fascist drive; all that this required was to see the hand of capitalism raised in attack upon these painfully acquired liberties. The united front is the restitution on a political plane of a natural unity which was bound to be sacred to all who toil. The united front is the will of the workers who have grasped the facts.

Without doubt in their ranks and among those elected May 12, there are men who still hold only to the defense of the threatened liberties. But to be anti-fascist means to think. By judging capitalism in its process of fascization, these men arrive at the inevitable conclusion of their thinking; and to escape fascism they will plunge into struggle against the regime that brings it forth. Anti-fascism, originally a position of defense, finally becomes anti-capitalism and the understanding of that position demands attack. The united front, a provisional line of defense, is thus transformed into a line of attack.

The struggles of tomorrow will eliminate the differences of doctrine, the conflicts of method among the masses of the united front. The most aggressive, effective and best adapted to events will triumph over the others. These methods will take the lead in the conflict and impose themselves because they will be right.

The bourgeoisie, terrified, at first saw only the gain of mayoralties and schools, the possession of which, of course, is precious to capitalist interests. The reality is much greater. Certainly anti-fascists, Communists and Socialists, when elected to office, very often violently alter the shameful drift of municipal life as capitalism conceives it. Their task is to expose the regime still more effectively and to defend, in spite of it and as long as it lasts, the interests of the workers. But the undertaking has further ends in view. Socialism is on its way to the

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conquest not only of political posts but of thought. And we may confidently assert that after such a victory as that of May over the innumerable ties that bourgeois interests have created around themselves, after such a shattering of servilities, of friendly relations, of all sorts of handouts, it is not a question of an electoral blow without a sequel, which capitalism is ordinarily pleased to imagine typical of democracy. Facts once lodged in the human mind persist. It is a blow, but a blow in the direction of a task, of a positive accomplishment.

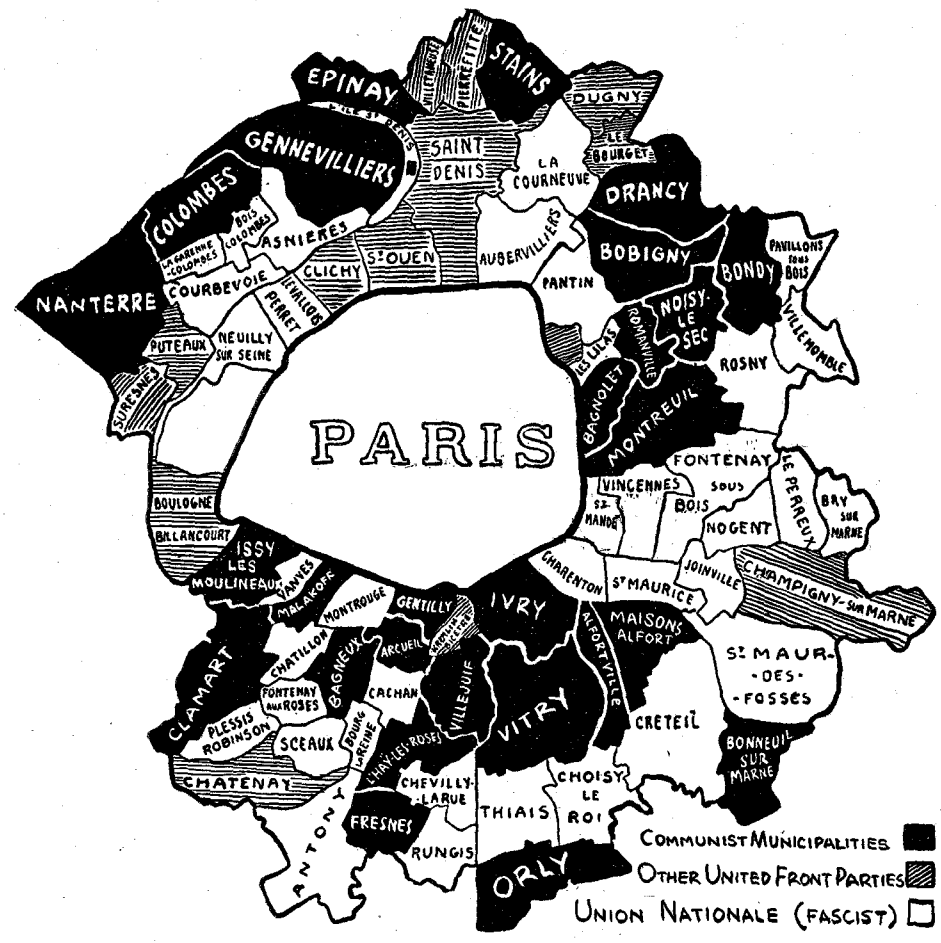
Let nobody fool himself. This is what the votes of Paris have declared and those of the suburbs and the provinces.

The bourgeois press stated that Paris had voted "national" in the capitalist sense of the word. This is absurd. The figures are plain. There are today in Paris three clearly defined groups. On the one hand 160,000 voices bound up directly or indirectly, through interest or ignorance with the continuance of the regime. Opposed to these there are first some hundred thousand uncertain voters, who partly joined the united front at the second balloting. Is it not significant that at the second balloting the fascist candidate himself lost strength to Professor Rivet? But the great social potentiality of the future in Paris are the 160,000 revolutionary voices who asserted themselves from the first Sunday's election. If Paris had not been electorally gerrymandered with that cleverness the bourgeoisie always displays in everything that touches its profits, Paris would have a majority of anti-fascists in the municipal government and one would not see a fascist elected in one district by 452 votes, while in a neighboring district a Communist was beaten in spite of his 4,367 votes.

Such results in Paris should cause reflection to those who in February, 1934, flattered themselves that they were going to carry the capital with a high hand and that they expressed public opinion. But there still remain the suburbs of Paris and the provinces.

While twenty-one anti-fascists enter the municipal council of the Seine, the votes of the suburbs have enlarged the "Red belt" around Paris. The entire press admits this. The fact that the capital has today a solid wall of revolutionary town halls around it carries a double meaning. It means first a tribute to administration by the masses; the "administrative myth" vanishes. The government of men ceases to appear the privilege of certain elements among them. But these votes above all demonstrate how the will to erect a new world has taken hold of the popular masses. The workers of the Parisian suburbs have already turned the united front into a front of attack. The dread of the bourgeoisie is justified. It will have to take into account these suburban effectives united with 160,000 Parisian Socialists and Communists.

However reassuring these results are, they



would not be adequate to the defense of popular liberties and to the coming struggles if the provinces had not responded to the lead of the capital. In fact, never has France seen such unconditional elections. Even the figures of defeat are indicative, such as for example the 6,505 votes of the Communist Party at Nice, where it polled only 540 in 1929. Everywhere, in the smallest rural communes as in the largest cities, the parties of labor gained votes, almost everywhere they elected candidates and they took possession of new municipalities by the hundreds. It is these hundreds of thousands of votes that determine in the final count the effectiveness of the united front. And already these figures are in default, the human march has left them behind. The united front is ceaselessly in motion, it lives on the thought that animates it. Continually growing stronger it will take control of economic developments as fast as the workers show willingness to master them.

The most notable result is the effect of the united front on the workers' parties. The bourgeoisie, trying to neutralize the Second International, has often announced that the united front would turn against it. It is worth knowing, then, that the Socialist Party has not been the goat in the contest. The shift of votes within the parties of the extreme left is found in general to have been compensated for by new gains. *It is among the middle class that the united front has made thousands of recruits.* The parties of socialism have all been enriched by new adherents. The bourgeois trickery met with cruel exposure in Marseilles, Lyons, Toulouse, Narbonne, Montpellier, Nantes, Colmar, Laon, Calais, Agen, Dijon, Perpignan, everywhere. The sections most devoted to preserving the *status quo,* the High Alps, Finistere, La Manche, Ain, Correze, have taken a part in the contest. The Mayoralty Chambers, where for so many years the voting of the budget was nothing but an administrative formality delivering the community over to exploiters, these chambers where empty forms of the Republic never succeeded in doing more than substitute her effigy in place of the statues of the Emperor, these rooms, throughout the country, are going to echo to the voices of the masses, which capitalism wanted to strangle under fascism, but which in France will not be suppressed.

Thus has been achieved a stage in the political life of France. In the eyes of the Radicals, formerly themselves vilified, socialism integrated ceases to seem a regime of destruction and murder. For the middle classes, it finally presents a possible social solution and the course of events is going to show before long that it is the only equitable solution, humanity's only chance. The united front will take up henceforth the fulfillment of that inspired rough draft which was the Commune of 1871. The new municipalities are bound to this future, from the most revolutionary to those that speak as yet only of anti-fascism. The mission of the *Front Populaire* has only begun. Tomorrow it will have need of all its followers. The next stage will be rocky. Serious events are in preparation. The strength of the united front alone will be capable of grappling with them successfully. The workers know now that the liberty of the masses depends upon their unity.

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Revolt of the Housewives

ANN BARTON

FOR THE past two weeks more than ten thousand New York housewives have left off their washing and ironing, their scrubbing and cleaning and all their other household tasks, to join together in the mass action of a picket line. They were swept into militant activity in the streets by the issue of exhorbitant meat prices.

The price of meat has been a major issue to the housewife for months. It has been the highest single item on her shrinking budget, has become almost a luxury food. She found herself forced to buy inferior cuts of meat or do without.

It is easy to understand why this first mass movement in the East against high prices has started with an offensive against the packers. With the general rise in food prices, shot upward by the N.R.A., the price of meat has risen 54.7 percent. The A.A.A. is part, but only part, of the explanation for the recent 62 percent rise in beef chuck. The meat packers have been driving the prices up and up. They produced 21 percent less merchandise than last year, yet they have taken in more money. The housewife has suffered.

To bring the question down to the terms of the kitchen, beef that cost from twenty to twenty-four cents per pound, now sells from thirty-four to thirty-six cents per pound. Round steak is up to thirty-nine cents, from thirty-two cents. Chuck steak, formerly nineteen cents, is now twenty-nine cents. Leg of lamb used to cost from fourteen to nineteen cents a pound. It is now twenty-seven cents and over. Lamb chops, up from twenty-eight cents, sell for thirty-five cents a pound.

This review of prices makes it clear why the meat strike, begun on May 22 in five or six neighborhoods, has spread so rapidly to other sections of the city, why women who have never ventured farther than a neighbor's flat to voice their views, have flung themselves into the activities of the meat strike.

All day long, the phone rings in the offices of the City Action Committee Against the High Cost of Living, which is directing the strike. The wires are burdened with the queries of hundreds of women who want to know how to start the strike in their own neighborhoods.

Grey-haired Jewish women in Brownsville, who have until now lived immersed in the affairs of their families, vote in their fraternal lodges to support the strike. They march with signs on their backs and shout "scab" to those who attempt to buy meat in picketed stores.

In Harlem, where the unemployment rate —and food prices—are higher than anywhere else in the city, three hundred Negroes, mainly women, stand before a single butcher shop and chant "Don't Buy Meat Until the Price Comes Down!" "Don't Buy Meat Until the Price Comes Down!"

Open air meetings are held throughout the city. Committees from the neighborhood are elected at these meetings. They go to talk things over with the retail butcher. They try to convince him he must fight against the wholesalers, together with the consumers. In many cases the retail butchers have closed their doors voluntarily and joined in the meat stoppage. Other butchers had their stores closed by picket lines.

The reverberations of the first day of the strike were felt as far as Chicago when meat prices sagged. Local Chicago newspapers stated that the drop was traceable to the activities of the New York Action Committee Against the High Cost of Living. In New York, though the packers refused to see delegations that crowded the doors, they wired frantically to Washington. Prices came down.

The women are demanding a reduction at the stores. If a butcher comes to terms, there is a settlement. Otherwise, the women picket the store from early morning until late at night. In Harlem, three hundred butchers agreed to close their stores for four days, from June 12 to June 15, and place no orders with the wholesalers. Joint delegations of butchers and consumers were to attempt to see the wholesalers. In the meantime, the Harlem butchers were selling out their stock at a 25 percent reduction in prices.

At the Yorkville Packing House, after three days of picketing, the wholesalers expressed willingness to negotiate. This was the result of pressure from the retail butchers as well as from the consumers.

A crowd of several hundred move swiftly along Eighth Avenue in Harlem. There are men and children, as well as women, white as well as Negro. They stop before a butcher shop. The crowd is augmented by the housewives of the new neighborhood. A young Negro boy tacks to a speakers' stand the sign: "We demand 25 percent reduction in the price of meat." The chairman opens the meeting. He speaks of the city-wide strike against the wholesalers, connecting it with the question of the health of the Negro children of Harlem, of malnutrition that could be avoided. He introduces the head of the Harlem Branch of the City Action Committee.

The young Negro woman leans intimately over the stand toward the crowd. Her gestures catch the women and hold them individually, pinning them to her words. She is passionately eloquent. She addresses her listeners as "sisters," "brothers" and occasionally as "my dears."

She speaks of prices in Harlem, higher than anywhere else. She speaks of the inferior quality of the meat sold in Harlem, worse than anywhere else in the city.

"We're only trying to stave off death a little longer," the woman says sharply. "This is a fight for the right to eat—for the right to feed our children. Isn't it so, sisters?" The men and women shout their agreement.

In the meantime, the negotiating committee comes out of the butcher shop. The butcher puts a sign into the window: "Settled with the Harlem Action Committee." A group of his customers goes over his price list with him, makes out a new one and pastes the two side by side in the window.

"In your churches—" says the speaker, "talk meat strike. In your lodges—in your prayer meetings!" This meeting is over and the flying squadron, again augmented, moves to the next butcher.

This is a larger shop where workers are employed. The meeting proceeds. The negotiating committee comes out of the store and announces that the bosses' assistant says the boss is out. The committee confers a moment with the Action Committee and a call is made for two pickets. Out of the volunteers, a frail white woman and a Negro man from the neighborhood take up the picket signs. They walk up and down before the shop as the crowd gathers. Their signs say "Butcher! Reduce Your Prices Or Close Your Shop." A figure hysterically signals the negotiating committee from the doorway. The audience is not surprised to learn that the boss has been found. Yes, he agrees to the demands of the committee. Twenty-five percent reduction in prices now and a four-day shut down.

I walk in after the committee has gone, look around. The boss comes over to me.

"What can you do about all this?" I ask the boss butcher.

He holds his intertwined hands at his back. They are clenched so hard that the knuckles are white. But his voice is soft and relaxed.

"The poor devils," he says, "you can't blame them. I see them come in here, a quarter in their hands, look at the meat prices, then go out again." He says the strike has already made the butchers put pressure upon the wholesalers. The prices have already gone down. He believes a four-day stoppage will have a further effect.

A member of the Committee comes back to have a last word with him, as the new prices go up in the window. He says quietly, "We do hope you'll cooperate with us. Because, you see, if you don't, the women will picket your place. You wouldn't want that. So we'll both cooperate." The boss butcher nods. The women flock to the store

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window excitedly to see the new prices. Again the crowd moves on.

"I like this! I like it!" says a matronly woman to a group of us. "That's the way to do it—fight for your rights! That's how they do it where I come from—in Panama." She gives her name to the committee who will come back to hold a consumers' meeting and elect further permanent committees in the neighborhood.

The leader of the Harlem Action Committee, Bonita Williams, is a Communist. She formerly headed the League of Struggle for Negro Rights. The women recognize other Communists on the picket lines with them.

"God bless the Communists," a woman gets up at a consumers' meeting to say. Members of the African Patriotic League, the Consolidated Tenants' League, women from a hundred churches are active on the committees in Harlem, as well as the Communist Party, the International Labor Defense, the Unemployed Council, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights.

The same diversity is seen in other sections of the city. In Brownsville, the auxiliary of a Democratic Club supports the strike. When a committee attempted to approach the women of one synagogue, the beadle said: "It is forbidden by the Bible to strike," and refused the committee entrance to the synagogue. However, members of the "ladies' auxiliary" of another synagogue, came into the local action committee headquarters with a resolution of support and immediately entered into the strike.

A consumers' meeting is being held in this section. Twelve hundred men and women are present. The women are accepting a settlement of four cents flat reduction on a pound of meat. Women get up to say that this is a tremendous victory. It shows what women in action can do. The women vote to settle with the local butchers on this basis. The agreement is made.

The housewives are not bashful. They rise to their feet and speak up what they are thinking. A short, stout woman is flushed from the excitement. She is a typical Jewish working-class housewife deep-breasted and worn. She speaks half in Yiddish, half in English.

"My husband told me not to come to this meeting," she says. "He said 'They are all Communists—and what are you going to do, my lady, become a Communist too?' But I came anyway. And I say to all of you, I am not afraid of you, Communists or not. It's for the right. Let us all be together in this thing, and may we all have happiness from it!" She sits down, happy and embarrassed, to a wave of applause.

The largest of all women's groups participating in the strike is the United Council of Working-Class Women, which on a smaller scale has conducted actions in various neighborhoods against high rents, against the sales tax. Its executive secretary, Rose Nelson, is a member of the executive committee of the City Action Committee Against the High Cost of Living that is conducting the strike. The chairman of this committee is a pretty, young housewife, Mrs. Sarah Licht, who in the Bronx where she lives, has been active in many local fights against high prices.

In many localities there are individual socialist women busy with the strike tasks. The socialist-controlled group, the Womens' Conference Against the High Cost of Living, sent nine delegates and its secretary, Miss Esther Friedman, to a conference of the City of Action Committee on June 8, held to spread the strike.

The first demand made by the women was a reduction of ten cents a pound. The butchers began by offering one cent reduction, two cents, then four cents on the higher priced meat. Women in the neighborhoods are settling on the basis of a four cent per pound flat reduction on all meat. They are agreeing to settle with the poultry dealers, allowing the retailers to charge six cents above quotation prices. Thousands of settlements had, up to the end of last week, already been effected.

The women intend to continue their offensive mainly against the meat wholesalers, who, although they have lowered prices, say the "situation is beyond the control of the packing industry." There will be a mass march to the City Hall. Delegations, picket lines against the wholesalers are on the order of the day. Sectional delegations will demand an audience with Mayor La Guardia, who has as yet refused to make an appointment with the women. There will be delegations to Washington.

"We have merely started," says Sarah Licht. "This movement will spread."

That what she says is undeniable is shown by the beginnings of similar movements in cities near New York—Newark, Passaic, Paterson and by actions started in Cleveland, Chicago and Philadelphia. In this spreading movement, a great factor is, of course, victories already won, and being daily added to, in New York.

A Letter from America

Slavery in the Virgin Islands

St. Thomas, V. I.

To The New Masses:

ON HIS second voyage of discovery in 1493, Columbus sighted a group of volcanic islands in the Spanish Main. Nearly 500 years later, in 1917, after centuries of colonization by Spanish, French, Danes and English, these islands which lie some 1,500 miles southeast of New York were sold to the United States by Denmark for $25,000,000. Called an impregnable naval outpost, St. Thomas, the capital island of the group had been desired by Germany as a submarine base. But one week before we entered the World War, the islands were transferred to America.

Eighteen years have passed. And now the government of the three Virgin Islands is under investigation by a Senate Committee headed by Robert R. Reynolds of North Carolina. The investigation started with a great amount of fanfare but hearings were abruptly discontinued until the Committee can return to St. Thomas next October. The announcement was received with bitter disgust and disappointment by 99 percent of the Islands' 22,000 native population.

In St. Thomas lives Mrs. Helen Dorch Longstreet. Her husband was General James Longstreet of the Confederate Army, second in command at the Battle of Gettysburg. Mrs. Longstreet came to St. Thomas because she wished to live in a peaceful, mild land where the vicissitudes of life would pass her by. But in five months she has this to say of conditions forced on the great mass of Negroes and the few whites who live on the Islands:

"The Island natives, both black and white, are living under economic slavery more cruel and oppressive than the chains which shackled the slaves of the Old South."

Mrs. Longstreet's observation is general. Her charges and others, directed against Governor Paul M. Pearson, Hoover appointee and Republican holdover, have not yet reached the American public as a whole, nor have their full implications of corruption, inefficiency and oppression been realized.

A Negro resident of St. Thomas, who declared he had not earned a penny since the beginning of 1935, told the investigators that he and his family were forced to search "dunghills and garbage heaps to find pork scraps which the white folks have thrown away." He told the Committee of how the Relief Administration had sent food to the Virgin Islands for distribution among the poor. "But we didn't get any of it," he added. Hundreds of natives came to the

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hearings to tell similar stories. Then, without warning or explanation, the hearings were postponed.

On the Island of St. Croix, forty miles across a choppy stretch of Caribbean water from St. Thomas, workers in the government-owned-and-operated Virgin Islands Corporation sugar-cane fields and rum distillery were unable to live on the meager earnings allotted them by the $1,000,000 P.W.A.-financed company. A group of these laborers, under the leadership of Morris Davis, native St. Crucian and graduate of the Blackstone School of Law in Chicago, held a conference. A family of four needed 59 cents a day with which to provide shelter and food and other necessities of life. Laborers were earning 50 cents a day. The group formed its own union and voted to go out on strike against the wage scale of the Virgin Islands Corporation.

Governor Pearson, whose administrative powers obviously are inadequate for the Virgin Islands (his background is that of a college professor and public speaker), knew very well the sordid living conditions on St. Croix after his four-year sojourn as governor. But Governor Pearson broke the strike. He cabled to St. Croix, sanctioning the hiring by company officials of laborers belonging to a government-sponsored union to take the place of the strikers.

Davis, a man who had a full sense of his responsibility in leading the workers, was unable to hold many of them in check. The outraged natives bolted his leadership. The corporation's standing sugar crop went up in flames. The action of the natives was a logical rebellion against unbearable oppression and starvation. Once before, in the middle of the last century, laborers had revolted against similar conditions—in those days, a wage of ten cents a day. Davis managed to stop the rising tide of resentment and prevent further incendiarism.

Back on the Island of St. Thomas there is a village called Coronage. Its inhabitants are white descendants of early French settlers. They have lived peaceful, industrious lives: of which the police department records are mute evidence.

The women of Coronage are experts in basket and hat weaving. Governor Pearson opened a "cooperative" store for tourists and invited the people of Coronage to market their handiwork. The plan has not been successful so far as the weavers are concerned.

One woman in Coronage, her bare feet planted solidly in the dirt in front of her small shack, said she paid 15 cents for materials with which to make one of the well-known native hats. She spent all day fabricating it and then sold it to the cooperative for 20 cents. The same hat is sold in the government's "cooperative" store for 45 cents.

Most of the white inhabitants of Coronage, as well as a huge percentage of the Negro population, walk the streets and fields of the three islands in their bare feet. Not because they have no desire for shoes. Footwear is a sign of caste among natives of the Virgin Islands and many are seen wearing the uppers of a long worn-out pair merely to let their neighbors know that once they were affluent enough to walk shod with leather.

An idea of the Virgin Islander's earnings may be had from the qualifications of voters. According to an old Danish law which is still in effect, a man must be twenty-five years of age or more and must have an annual income of at least $300.

Unemployed men work all day for a few cents. One white man in St. Thomas hired two expert workers to repair his boat. At the end of eleven hours in the hot sun, each received 20 cents. Asked if they were satisfied, the men merely shrugged their shoulders and said that there was nothing they could do about it.

Many of the poor natives live in shacks without foundations, of construction that is unable to withstand the hurricanes. Consequently, when the hurricane period is over, many homes have crumbled or blown away, and the toll of lives has been great.

The Virgin Islander is a peaceful man. He is content with only the bare necessities of life. He suffers years of abuse and neglect before he registers protest or takes measures to alleviate the situation which imperialism has forced on him.

It is only now that the American public is beginning to realize that the charges against Governor Pearson contain more than a grain of truth.

One Negro native leader said:

"Things are in a hell of a mess. If Governor Pearson doesn't watch out this unrest will break out in violence and somebody will get killed."

Why have newspaper readers in the United States not learned of the existing conditions on St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John? The reason is simple.

Dances, cocktail parties and pleasant automobile drives to picnics are designed to make the visiting press representative's stay in St. Thomas a pleasant one and to divert his attention from the real situation. But a more effective means of press censorship is practiced on the native newspapermen who see daily, at first hand, the slavery to which their fellow citizens of the Virgin Islands are subjected.

There are eight active newspapermen on the Island of St. Thomas and one on the Island of St. Croix. All but one of these men have double incomes, the first from newspaper work and the second from government employment.

George Blake, correspondent for the Associated Press, is also a clerk in Commissioner of Finance Morris F. de Castro's office. Adolph Gireau, correspondent for both United Press and International News Service, is chief clerk in the St. Thomas police office and an immigration inspector. Leon Mawson, correspondent for The New York Times, is assistant clerk of the United States District Court in St. Thomas. Axel Schade, of Christiansted, St. Croix, correspondent for the Associated Press, is employed as a chemist by the government-owned Virgin Islands Corporation. Antonio Jarvis, teacher in the St. Thomas municipal school, and Ariel Melchior, official government photographer, are owners of The St. Thomas Daily News. Ralph Chalbert, owner-editor of The St. Thomas Tribune, sold his sugar factory to the government, according to records on file in Washington. The two remaining newspapermen are opposed to the administration and operate the only anti-Pearson newspaper, The Emancipator.

It is a matter of government record that when Pearson came to rule as the first civilian governor after fourteen years of Naval administration, the Danish-West Indies Company, the entire stock of which is said to be owned in Denmark, paid thousands of dollars annually to the government in tonnage dues. The government received also huge annual revenue in the form of ships' dues from visiting freighters and liners. Two years later, the Colonial Council, legislature for the Virgin Islands, voted in special session to suspend tonnage dues on fuel and coal, thereby giving economic relief to the Danish-West Indies Company during the collapse of world trade. The council argued that the company, though foreign, was a main industry in St. Thomas, employing many natives and encouraging harbor trade and deserving of municipal help in its severe competition with Jamaican coaling and fueling ports.

To meet the deficit resulting from suspension of tonnage dues, the Colonial Council, four members of which were directors in the Danish-West Indies Company, advocated a 5-percent internal revenue on all imports—even from the United States. The native population protested. Their spokesmen argued that the revenue levy in reality means a 5-percent duty on American goods since American goods comprised the bulk of imports. St. Thomians and Crucians pointed suspiciously to the presence of the Danish-West Indies Company officials on the Colonial Council. In spite of popular protest the internal revenue law became effective in February last year.

So today, ships arriving in beautiful St. Thomas Harbor, called the best harbor in the Caribbean, pay in addition to harbor dues, docking fees to the Danish-West Indies Company, which owns the only operating dock in the harbor.

Directly across the harbor from the Danish-West Indies Company docks, approximately the same distance to the business centre of St. Thomas, the abandoned docks of the United States Navy are rotting, sadly in need of paint and repairs. The harbor is deepest at this point and whereas many deep-draft ships are compelled to anchor in mid-harbor because they cannot tie-up at the Danish-West Indies Company docks, they

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could land at the abandoned Navy docks, if they were in operation.

Further evidence of the charge that though the old Danish landowners on the islands are secretly opposed to the administration, they side with Pearson in public for their own economic ends, is supported by the story of Albert Meduro, native owner of a lumber company in the city of St. Thomas.

"One day this spring I went out on the east side of the Island of St. Thomas on business," Mr. Meduro said. "I came upon a large group of native P.W.A. laborers removing stone from the fields belonging to the 'Tu Tu' estate of Dr. V. Christensen, physician for the Danish-West Indies Company and chairman of the Colonial Council, and V. A. Miller, also a member of the Colonial Council.

"The foreman of the P.W.A. gang—Richard Jensen his name was—told me they were removing the stone to be later used in road building. But the road he had reference to was located many miles distant on the opposite side of the island. Any St. Thomian knows there is just as much stone along the contemplated road's site as on the 'Tu Tu' estate."

Other natives charge further that even the Relief Administration food and flour sent to St. Thomas was subjected to an unwarranted wharfage-handling fee by the Danish-West Indies Company.

Wages of Negro natives allegedly suffered despite the suspension of tonnage dues. The wages of those natives working in the coaling and fueling service of the Danish-West Indies Company were cut one-third, more charges reveal.

Though the Danish-West Indies Company materially benefited by the action of the Colonial Council, the natives charged they were made to suffer economically even more than before.

Looking about for something to tax, the administration cast its eyes on the lowly donkey, chief means of transportation for the Negro native and his farm produce. The Colonial Council passed a law which provided that the already impoverished native must pay an annual tax on each donkey.

For many years, under both Danish and later United States ownership, light sailing craft owned by native fishermen were taxed. Though the Danish-West Indies Company had succeeded in lightening its shipping tax burdens, the small and poverty-stricken fisherman must still pay a government levy for the privilege of casting his home-made net into the blue Caribbean outside St. Thomas Harbor.

And still, with all these charges, with an impoverished native population suffering under an oppressive capitalistic system, with food hard to obtain for the majority and a ten-cent coin a large sum to the average Negro native, the Senate Investigating Committee has called off the hearings until next October.

G. D'MARCY O'BRIEN.

Correspondence

"Due Process of Law"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

We wish to inform the readers of THE NEW MASSES, of an extreme case of persecution of a sympathizer with the revolutionary workers. J. B. Nelson, 3720 Lake Drive, East St. Louis, Ill., possessing considerable property, has signed bail bonds for any victim of capitalist oppression, regardless of his political faith. He has signed bonds for Robert Minor, the Hillsboro boys, A. J. Muste, Ray Wyckoff and a hundred others, too numerous to mention.

Over a period of years he has been threatened, by the American Legion, Ku Klux Klan and other fascist organizations, but as long as he has security he has never once let a prisoner lie in jail. In the case of Ray Wycoff, charged with inciting to riot last June 25, and whose bail was set at $35,000, he offered to post $70,000 cash, but was refused. Shortly after this he signed two of the Hillsboro boys' bonds, listing seven pieces of property as security.

On these pieces of property the taxes have been raised almost 300 percent. When he went to the tax assessor's office to file a complaint they told him frankly that if he would refuse to sign any more Communists' bonds his taxes would not be raised. He told them that as long as he had any property left he would sign the bonds of any class-war prisoner.

Following is a list of the property he put up as security in the Hillsboro case, showing the amount of taxes before and after signing these bonds. All of this property is in East St. Louis, Ill., and no improvements have been made.

Taxes on the property in the neighborhood identically like this put up by the same contractor have not even raised one cent.

Residence	*Amount of Taxes 1934*	*1935*
555 North 31st St.	$ 73.32	$221.60
433 North 21st St.	62.46	113.59
1716 Henrietta Ave.	70.64	113.59
1110 Market Ave.	23.95	33.28
Security Park Lots 3-4-6	58.31	159.27
3635 Market Ave.	37.00	102.50
410 North 57th St.	35.00	83.80

East St. Louis, Ill.

RAY WYCKOFF.

From Vera Cox

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Having been chosen winner of the Thomas Boyd Memorial Contest for students, I want to express my appreciation of what both Mrs. Boyd and THE NEW MASSES have done to spur on production of revolutionary literature by students. The temporary sense of achievement is perhaps the least important factor in the contest. I believe the most important part of it was the renewed impetus given radical student writers. I sincerely expect that this impetus will not die but that it will grow and spread to be a tribute to the memory of the revolutionary genius of Thomas Boyd.

Already students in several colleges are communicating with each other as to the posibility of establishing a national student left-wing publication. The rather nebulous idea is at present to have the magazine include all types of militant, liberal and radical thought. It is to be highly intellectual in its revolutionary poetry, essays, stories and, eventually, illustrations. This is little more than an idea at present, but perhaps the close of the year will see such a periodical. Several magazines of this type have had success among English students. I urge that all students interested in this idea write Vera Cox, 1335½ Birch Street, San Bernardino, Calif. As this movement seems very likely to crystallize, part of the prize won in the contest will go into the establishment of the magazine. Part will also go toward the establishment of a sorely-needed Workers' Center in San Bernardino. The rest will return to the revolutionary movement, directly or indirectly. Incidentally, the proposal for the student intellectual magazine has not received the sanction of any organization; it merely represents the plan of a few individual students of various parts of the country.

All students interested in revolutionary writing owe Mrs. Boyd and THE NEW MASSES a great debt for bringing new life to a field too long neglected—student revolutionary writing.

Redlands, Calif. VERA COX.

Letters in Brief

A reader sends us copies of a recent exchange of correspondence between George W. Christians, of the Crusader White Shirts, whom John L. Spivak exposed, and Congressman George G. Sadowski, of Michigan. Christians had written Sadowski first, apparently attacking a bill the lawmaker was backing, as well as his religion, for the Congressman remarks: "I should have better sense than to answer letters from buzzards like you." He then goes on to prove himself a 100 percent American and a southern gentleman as well, by saying: "As a boy I lived down in Baldwin County in the southern part of Alabama and I have had the oportunity of meeting and knowing a lot of people in the South. Most of them are fine gentlemen, highly intelligent. I did meet a few, however, who were ignorant and bigoted to the extreme. These were known as the 'poor white trash' that even the Negroes looked down on. . . . I feel confident that you could not be classified amongst the first." To which Mr. Christians retorts in approved Crusader style: "There is nothing that I enjoy so much as to merit the enmity of a bird with a name like yours. . . . In order to clear up any doubts in your mind, let me assure you that I intend to get Economic Liberty under the Human Effort Monetary System as embodied in H.R. 4747, for the American people and I don't give a damn how I get it. I will fight Jews, Catholics, Hottentots, Banksters, Politicians, Publishers and anyone else who gets in the way, using Ignorance, Prejudice, Cowardice, Bigotry, Mobs or any other club I can lay my hands on—so what! . . . You're a Hell of a Patriot. Yours in the fellowship of Freedom."

The Unemployed Teachers Association wishes to draw the attention of all unemployed teachers, both licensed and unlicensed, to the registration bureau it maintains for them. Destitute teachers have found the Relief Section, which meets Thursdays at 8 P.M., of considerable aid to them. Hours of registration are from 4 to 6 P.M. weekdays and 12 to 2 P.M. Saturdays at the Unemployed Teachers Association headquarters, 11 West 18th St.

Henry Lipshutz, of the New Jersey District of the International Labor Defense writes that in the Newark *Waiting for Lefty* situation the I.L.D. is conducting the case. The I.L.D. called upon the American Civil Liberties Union for support, which was given.

The American Mercury strikers send us an appeal for funds to aid them in their strike, now in its sixth week. Strike headquarters are at 66 West 56th Street, care of Scott, and contributions may be sent there.

Ruth Hoffman, secretary of the Public Works and Unemployed League of Venice, Calif., forwards copies of letters sent by the League to President Roosevelt, Attorney General Cummings and J. Edgar Hoover, Chief of the Bureau of Investigations. The League drew attention to the remarkable results obtained by the so-called "G" men in the Weyerhauser kidnaping case, contrasting this success with the "G" men's failure to act in the kidnaping of Robert Minor and David Levinson in Gallup, N. M.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Chamberlin's "History"

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN'S[1] two-volume history of the Russian Revolution—from the fall of Czarism in March, 1917, to the conclusion of the Civil War and the introduction of the New Economic Policy (N.E.P.) in March, 1921—offers imposing evidence of the author's vast industry and erudition. The 1067 pages are chock-full of quotations, notes, references; they include a rich appendix, a careful index, an apparently exhaustive bibliography, good illustrations, maps, statistical tables and various other appurtenances of painstaking scholarship.

Structurally the work is sound. Despite some unnecessary overlapping and repetitions the intricate pattern of the stirring events of the period is traced with precision and clarity. A number of reviewers have correctly indicated various sources which have provided the skeleton for the earlier section of Mr. Chamberlin's work. Beginning with the February days, however, Mr. Chamberlin, it seems to me, has drawn wisely and generously from Stalin's *The October Revolution* (listed in the bibliography).

Where the skeleton of a projected structure is on hand, building is a relatively simple matter, a mere filling in of numerous details. Any one who has had experience with research knows that. In a speech delivered on November 19, 1924, Stalin, discussing the role of the Bolsheviks on the eve of the October Revolution, supplied the plan ploddingly followed in the first volume:

> 1. *The period of the new orientation of the Party* (*March-April*). The principal facts of this period: a. overthrow of czarism; b. formation of the Provisional Government (dictatorship of the bourgeoisie); c. appearance of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry); d. diarchy; e. April demonstration; f. first government crisis. . . .
>
> 2. *The period of the revolutionary mobilization of the masses* (*May-August*). The principal facts of this period are: a. the April demonstration in Leningrad and the formation of a coalition government with the participation of "socialists"; b. the First of May demonstrations in the principal centers of Russia under the slogan of "democratic peace"; c. the June demonstration in Leningrad under the main slogan of "Down with the Capitalist Ministers!" d. the June offensive at the front and the reverses of the Russian army; e. the July armed demonstration in Leningrad, the withdrawal of the Cadet ministers from the government; f. the bringing of counter-revolutionary troops from the front, the demolition of the editorial offices of Pravda, the struggle of the counter-revolution against the Soviets and the formation of a new coalition government headed by Kerensky; g. the Sixth Congress of the Party, which issued the slogan of preparing for the armed uprising; h. the counter-revolutionary State Conference and the general strike in Moscow; i. the unsuccessful advance of Kornilov on Leningrad, the revival of the Soviets, the resignation of the Cadets and the formation of the "Directorate." . . .
>
> 3. *The period of the organization of the assault* (*September-October*). The basic facts of this period are: failure of the idea of a *bloc* with the Cadets; b. the passing over of the Moscow and Leningrad Soviets to the side of the Bolsheviks; c. the Congress of the Soviets of the Northern Region and the decision of the Leningrad Soviet opposing the withdrawal of the troops; d. the decision of the Central Committee of the Party on the uprising and the formation of the Military-Revolutionary Committee of the Leningrad Soviet; e. the decision of the Leningrad garrison to give armed support to the Leningrad Soviet and the organization of a system of commissars of the Military-Revolutionary Committee; f. the action of the Bolshevik armed forces and the arrest of the members of the Provisional Government; g. the seizure of power by the Military-Revolutionary Committee of the Leningrad Soviet and the establishment of a Council of People's Commissars by the Second Congress of Soviets.

BUT Chamberlin's indebtedness to Stalin is more perceptible in his second volume. The Bolshevik Revolution is viewed as a sequence of three critical periods: the first—from the day of the establishment of Soviet rule in Russia until German imperialism was routed; the second—from the collapse of Germany down to the time of Denikin's wide offensive against the Soviets, when he stood at the gates of Tula; the third—from the defeat of Denikin up to the end of the Civil War and the introduction of the N.E.P. This division, as well as the analysis of each period, was provided by Stalin as far back as 1920 ("Report at the Celebration Meeting of the Baku Soviet.")

Mr. Chamberlin recommends his book as "something of a pioneer in its field." Perhaps. But it is well to bear in mind that the most difficult tasks of the pioneer-historian—surveying the ground, clearing the field and putting up of the skeleton structures—have been excellently performed by others. Insofar as Mr. Chamberlin has utilized the analysis and perspicuity of authoritative people, so far has he done an adequate job.

The crucial test comes up when we deal with the details our historian has collected in the course of twelve years and with his success in breathing reality and life into them. Here Mr. Chamberlin fails to make the grade.

What is mainly lacking in his narrative is a consistent point of view—a philosophy of history. This results in indiscriminate, frequently erroneous emphases. A fatal weakness is the inadequate appreciation of the subtler, more elusive, yet often most essential aspects of the great social drama the author essays to depict.

Throughout, Mr. Chamberlin insists on the Bolshevik Revolution as being a specifically Russian phenomenon. It is in the despotic nature of the ancient Czarist regime, in the peasant uprising in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries led by Stenka Razin and Emelyan Pugachov, in the undigested influence of the West, of Europe, which started to percolate into Russia in the 18th century, in the ineptness of the Decembrists' rebellion of 1825, in the symptoms revealed by the revolution of 1905, in the numerical weakness and political inexperience of the Russian middle class whose "democratic evolution" in Russia's political life was effectively blocked by the Czar, that our historian finds explanation for Bolshevism, for War Communism, for the cruelty, the excesses, the difficulties of the Civil War. The Bolshevik Revolution was inevitable—its character inhered in all of Russia's past.

This almost fatalistic conception of history, however, is completely forgotten when Mr. Chamberlin writes about the Soviet regime in Hungary. Now we learn that the "internal difficulties of Russia were reproduced in Hungary on a smaller theater." Indeed, "normal exchange between town and countryside completely broke down. The peasants rebelled when there were efforts to take their foodstuffs by force. The workers cooled noticeably in their attitude toward the Soviets when they began to feel the pangs of hunger. Tibor Samueli, head of Bela Kun's Political Police, acquired a reputation for ferocity comparable with that of Latzis, Peters, Boki and some other figures in the Russian Cheka. . . ." Chamberlin reports "shootings and punitive expeditions." The "Social Democrats . . . looked longingly to the Allied mission in Budapest, which promised food if the Soviet dictatorship were overthrown." When the Red regime fell and the "conservative dictatorship of Admiral Horthy was instituted, a period of White Terror set in. *As in Russia,* the Hungarian White Terror was markedly anti-Semitic. . . ."

So the cardinal difference between the Soviet Revolution in Russia and the Soviet Revolution in Hungary was, from Chamberlin's own account, the fact that Hungary, being smaller and farther west, was more vulnerable and more helpless in face of Allied pressure and intrigue. And all the elaborate historical background, filling scores of pages to explain the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia as a specifically Russian phenomenon, falls to the ground. The history of Hungary was utterly different from that of Russia,

[1] *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1921,* by William Henry Chamberlin, Two Volumes. The Macmillan Company. $10.

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yet the essential features of the struggle for power between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat were the same in both countries!

IN DISCUSSING the collapse of the Constituent Assembly in Russia, Mr. Chamberlin maintains that the "fundamental" cause for that collapse

> . . . was the absence in Russia of any parliamentary tradition, of any widespread understanding, among the masses of the significance of universal suffrage, free parliamentary debate, civil liberties and other things which, in Western countries, were the fruits of centuries of a process of struggle and evolution which had no parallel in Russia. The Constituent Assembly collapsed because it had no solid foundation, because Russia was conspicuously lacking in all the conditions which historical experience indicates as essential to the effective functioning of parliamentary democracy: general literacy; a numerous, well-organized middle class; a long tradition of settling internal differences by peaceful methods; a keen sense of personal and property rights. Because Russia lacked these characteristics the alternative to Tsarism was not constitutional monarchy or liberal republicanism, but Bolshevism.

Very fine. But Mr. Chamberlin never stops to ask himself the question: What about capitalist Germany and Italy and Austria and Spain, which did not lack these democratic "characteristics?" Why have they abandoned bourgeois democracy and adopted fascism? Is it possible that Mr. Chamberlin, a liberal, regards the tyranny of Nazis, of fascists, of finance capital, as more "democratic" than the dictatorship of the proletariat and as more in accord with and a further extension of "Western" democratic traditions? One is almost inclined to suspect the liberal Mr. Chamberlin of being a potential fascist. One almost discerns in his book a note of regret that "anti-Bolshevik Russia was never able to create a united front under a leader who could win support in all classes of the population . . . that the White movement produced no Mussolini, no Hitler." And what about Mr. Chamberlin's democratic traditions?

The author's indefinite point of view vitiates the whole book. Thus, the reader is often forced to wonder whether Mr. Chamberlin is writing an account of the Russian Revolution or a lengthy treatise on "why the Whites failed." Here the emphasis is ridiculously lopsided. Surely, in retrospect, the activities of first-rate and tenth-rate leaders of counter-revolutionary armies and guerilla bands during the Civil War were not nearly as important as the activities of the leaders of the Revolution. Yudenich, Wrangel, Kolchak, Krasnov, Kornilov, Makhro and a host of other, some of them purely casual, people are accorded incomparably more space and analytical study than Frunze or Budiony or Voroshilov or Krylenko.

True, like most White historians, Chamberlin grants Lenin genius—with reservations: he denies him originality of thought. He also rises to the defense of Trotzky, repeatedly and often disingenuously. But the tremendous role of Stalin in the Revolution —to take one striking example—is barely suggested and his decisive services in the Civil War are completely ignored. Following the vogue among counter-revolutionists, Mr. Chamberlin exaggerates the special part played by Trotzky in the October revolution, failing to make clear to his uninitiated readers that Trotzky, who was a relative newcomer in the Bolshevik Party in the period of October, did not, indeed could not, play any *special* role, that he was following and executing the instructions of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, of which all-important body he was at that time not even a member. "Anyone familiar with the machinery of the leadership of the Bolshevik Party," says Stalin of the Central Committee at that time, "will quite readily understand that it could not have been otherwise: had Comrade Trotzky only acted contrary to the will of the Central Committee, he would have forfeited all influence on the course of events." Carried away by the spectacular, the glamorous, Chamberlin fails to focus his reader's attention on the really significant, really decisive factor in the struggle—the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party and its individual members.

THERE is plenty of evidence to substantiate K. Voroshilov's contention that

> During the 1918-1920 period, Comrade Stalin was probably the only person whom the Central Committee despatched from one fighting front to another, choosing always those places most fraught with danger for the revolution. Where it was comparatively quiet, and everything was going smoothly, where we had successes, Stalin was not to be found. But where for various reasons the Red Army was cracking up, where the counter-revolutionary forces through their successes were menacing the very existence of the Soviet Government, where confusion and panic might any moment develop into helplessness, catastrophe, there Stalin made his appearance. He took no sleep at night, he organized, he took the leadership into his own strong hands, he relentlessly broke through difficulties, and turned the corner, saved the situation. Stalin himself wrote about it in one of his letters to the Central Committee in 1919, saying that "he was being transformed into a specialist for cleaning out the stables of the war department.

In Tsaritsin (now Stalingrad) in the summer of 1918, in Perm at the end of 1918, in Petrograd in the spring of 1919, on the Southern Front in the autumn of 1919, in crucial campaigns against Krasnov, Kolchak, Yudenich and Denikin, Stalin's military activities were colossal.

On the Seventeenth Anniversary of the Founding of the Red Army, Karl Radek wrote:

> What happened behind the scenes at Red staff headquarters, how the decisions there were arrived at—all this has only become common knowledge among the masses during recent years. During the Civil War itself, the difficulty of putting aside the regular commanders compelled a concealment of the actual situation. *This meant that the leadership of the army was really in the hands of Lenin and his nearest colleague, Stalin.*

As an historian, Mr. Chamberlin would be within his rights to challenge and if possible disprove the above estimate of Stalin's place in the conduct of the Civil War—he had no right to ignore it.

But while wasting endless pages on infinitesimal and irrelevant details of minor military campaigns and on futile speculations as to what might or might not have happened if this or that move by this or that detachment had or had not been made (Mr. Chamberlin is not a military authority and his opinions on matters of military strategy are, we suspect, quite worthless) our historian relegates Stalin's work during the entire period of the Civil War to a brief three-line note. But then, Mr. Chamberlin, we understand, does not like Stalin!

Indeed, he does not like the Bolsheviks altogether. Words like "cruelty," "hatred," "spoilation," "plunder," "state-organized homicide," "slaughter," "ferocity," "frightfulness," "atrocity," "wild," "brutal," etc., etc. recur over and over again in his depiction of the Reds. On the other hand, unable to deny the White terror altogether, Mr. Chamberlin very often manages to insert little "explanations" which, if not historically tenable, at least indicate that his heart is in the right place. Thus, speaking of Kolchak's terror, Mr. Chamberlin hastens to remark that "some of the worst acts of which [terror] were probably [!] carried out without the knowledge or desire of the Admiral!" Occasionally, our historian even indulges in a bit of unconscious humor. A delicious example: "One of Kolchak's generals, Rozanov, proved an apt pupil of the Bolsheviki in the matter of taking and shooting hostages. . . ." The sweet, innocent Czarist general had to learn cruelty from the Bolsheviks—this is a *fact*, an *historical* fact!

And here is another "fact" which our historian never wearies of reiterating. Whenever he speaks of Bolshevik "atrocities" he invariably links together the words "wealthy" and "educated." The implication throughout is that the Bolsheviks were a bunch of barbarians determined to liquidate the representatives of culture. And he never attempts to reconcile this with the fact, which he himself cursorily reports, that theaters were crowded, that museums were opened, that education was being spread through the Red Army and that even scientific research, despite the indescribable difficulties of the period, was encouraged. And he never attempts to explain that, except for some under the circumstances unavoidable cases of rowdyism, the activities of the Reds were directed not against the "educated" nor even against all of the formerly "wealthy," but against those "wealthy" and therefore presumably "educated" individuals who were opposed to the proletarian and peasant dictatorship. If an "educated" person was with the Revolution, he was honored and appreciated. Look at the Moscow Art Theater, at Meyerhold, at Professor Pavlov, at the Futurist poets and artists and even at the former Czarist officers who were willing to serve the Revolution. To repeat *ad nauseum* and without qualification that the Reds were "slaughter-

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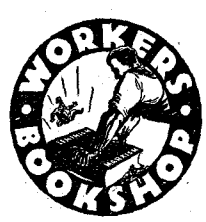

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ing" the "educated" is not history; it is slander.

AS I turn the pages of these review volumes I find the margins speckled with my own cryptic comments—"blah," "stupid," "contradiction," "inconsistency," "bad writing," "misunderstands the nature of the peasantry," "mixed image," "muddled," "bunk," "uncritical quoting from anarchists and counter-revolutionists," etc. Space does not allow to enter into a complete analysis of all the errors, inaccuracies, irrelevancies contained in the book. One thing Chamberlin can certainly not be accused of—and that is objectivity. Yet, in the Saturday Review of Literature, Professor Sidney Hook, a Trotzkyite, waxes very eloquent over Mr. Chamberlin's "critical conscientiousness in a field notorious for uncontrolled subjectivism . . . whatever else this history is, it is a history of what actually happened." How one with even the slightest revolutionary pretentions could fail to be repelled by the numerous evidences of Chamberlin's semi-fascist interpretations of the proletarian revolution is a mystery.

Hook lauds Chamberlin for the "integrity" of his research and the "honesty" and "descriptive accuracy" of his report. And one wonders how descriptively accurate Mr. Chamberlin is when he keeps on harping on "hatred" and "envy" as the sole motives of the revolution. The pale-livered Mr. Chamberlin is terribly upset by the surge of hatred released by the revolution. It never occurs to him that hatred and love are bi-valent, that a period of intense hatred must have released simultaneously intense love. The question is: Hatred for *whom?* Love for *whom?* The greater your hatred for the enemy the greater the love for your friend who is fighting by your side. We are speaking of imponderables, of course. But if the total quantities of hatred and love generated by the revolution could be placed on a scale, we believe that love would tip the scale.

Chamberlin is blind to the splendid vision of the revolution, to its beauty, to the great inspiration and joy it brought into the lives of vast masses of oppressed peoples. He fails to capture the essence of the revolution, the very life of it. No, it is not in Mr. Chamberlin's heavy, grey and lifeless tomes, but in a picture like *Chapayev,* a novel like Fadaev's *Nineteen* or Libidinsky's *A Week* or Gladkov's *Cement* and in the countless revolutionary songs and legends and poems of the liberated Soviet masses that one will find the soul of the October Revolution.

One Oriental legend comes to mind:

> When Lenin was born into the world, he saw man's woe and he sighed. The earth heard that sigh, and people knew that he was born. . . . And Lenin walked from hamlet to hamlet, from door to door; he beheld man's suffering, and his heart began to glow with a great hatred and a great love. . . . Lenin gave his heart to the people. And the heart sent forth countless sparks. And each spark was brighter than a bonfire at night. And people saw the way to happiness.

There is more fundamental truth in the brief Oriental legend than in all the 1067 pages of Chamberlin's "history of what actually happened."

JOSHUA KUNITZ.

Poetry Out of Season

CHORUS FOR SURVIVAL, by Horace Gregory. Covici-Friede. $2.

HORACE GREGORY'S announced intention is to give us a book "composed of dramatic monologues and dialogues revealing the emotional life of our time." In the 128 pages of the *Chorus,* so subtly evoking the mood of the Greek wedding songs, this reviewer found no echo of the agony of a dying world in its labor of rebirth, nor even a suggestion of the soul pattern of his own American workers.

In a recent article in THE NEW MASSES Mr. Gregory declared himself a "sympathetic outsider," in regard to the Communist Party. Is it possible that he is merely a "sympathetic outsider" to the whole American working class?

The most apt characterization of the book is to be found in the poet's own words: "Cold rhyme out of season." Of rare aquarelle qualities as to technique, Gregory's *Chorus* is without the light that kindles. His image-making of "the six feet of man, silks, velvet, cheerful eyes" is indeed a heatless, indirect light concealing the mystic source of its emanation.

To the mass of workers who crave the warm fire of comradery in the bitter cold of the economic night and seek the revolutionary beacon to point the way out, there is no satisfaction in Gregory's *Chorus.*

If, according to John Strachey, literature (including, we presume, poetry) is arithmetic where the other arts are algebra, Gregory's *Chorus for Survival* distinctly belongs in the category of the other arts, as far as the worker-reader is concerned. So glyptic in its etching

> Spring in my heart
> the city in the sun

and

> Dreams still warm

and

> Each house an institution for the blind

Or lines of such sonorous metallic reverberation as

> through houses open to the wind
> through cold and rain

one is nonetheless impelled to class Horace Gregory's writings among the luxury products of bourgeois liberal poets who though making an effort to identify themselves with the revolutionary mass struggle are shifting the center of their individualistic gravity to where it can be made either meaningless or meaningful by a twist of obscurantism, or rendered guileless by the naive confession "I am very far removed from the political activity of the Party."

The classic acid test of good poetry generally accepted is:

> delete a line or even a strophe and see whether one's reaction will be that of a loss or incompleteness.

By which criterion Gregory's *Chorus* is without a doubt a poetical work of high order. But there is yet another test to be applied. Delete a whole poem, even an entire book and see whether your reaction will be that of a loss or incompleteness, in which case we doubt that the proletarian reader will be able to answer in the affirmative.

Throughout in Gregory's *Chorus* there is evident a subconscious effort to escape social realities and affirmations. Exceptions to this may be found toward the end of the book, as in the ironic piece beginning with

> Sorry if I intrude
> Sorry my face is here to spoil the party

or

> For you my son
> I write of what we were.

and

> Under the stone I saw them flow
> Express Times Square at five o'clock
> Eyes set in darkness, trampling down
> all under, limbs and bodies driven . . .
> to empty rooms, to empty arms,
> Wall paper gardens flowering there.

Gregory strikes a note of realistic hopefulness in such lines as

> Wake my limbs again
> Adam-Ralph Emerson.

but this is negated by flights into

> platonic idealism which is part of our
> New England culture.
> (from the anouncement of the Jacket)

Where is the bold vision of a world bound together in proletarian unity? Where the encouragement to the worker to "build the new world for our sons to enter?"

In speeding to the never-never land of political neutrality Gregory streamlines his medium to meet the resistance of modern poetry to rhyme and reason, and succeeds in robbing his work of poignancy. The Ukrainian saying

> the heart plants but the mind reaps

seemingly holds true for all forms of poetry and thus where the heart has failed to sow in the fertile soil of class values there is but

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a scant crop for the reaper, no matter how sharp his intellectual scythe and how wide his swing.

Nevertheless there is a great power of eloquence in such lines as:

> I saw the naked cowering man
> shrink from the midnight of his eye.

and

> I saw each man who rode alone
> prepare for sleep in deeper sleep
> and there to ride sightless, unknown
> to darkness that no day recalls.

or such high-stalked *fleurs de mal:*

> Until your hands grow cold
> and skin turn green
> body split through and green as green
> glass bottle that's thrown away.

Finally, there are in *Chorus for Survival* such utterly defeatist lines as:

> How many times before we fall
> **we fail.**

and in a poem on lynching:

> No longer betray
> a separate identity
> black bone and ashes
> here at least confers
> that martyrdom from which no man is free.

A bitter, sweet plaintiveness, almost Heinesque in its pathetic yearning for immortality, permeates such lines as:

> Let me survive
> Outlive the syllables that sound my name,

The sharp abruptness of some of Gregory's opening verses, the deft fadeouts of a number of others, the perfect hold on his medium with an eye to word-Gobelins, as antique in their conception as they are brave in their execution like the lines:

> as you and I break handclasp,

or

> leaping the ashes of time's Illium

and

> Still floats the wedding caul, the oversoul,

definitely put Horace Gregory among the foremost contemporary poets.

The proletarian reader, however, who looks to Horace Gregory, in spite of the latter's political flounderings, as one of his bards we venture to say would welcome in him a turn from the *leitmotif* of "bitterly to know thyself," from the Grecian Urn theme and Elegies in the Country Churchyards—a turn from the prothalamian to the stirring orchestration (in brass if need be) of working-class struggle, hopes and achievements — a turn from the intellectualized thinly-smoking stufa, to an eruption of hot lava like that flowing in the songs of Johannes Becher, from the resigned exiat of "I must witness the conflict, then walk away and gain perspective to forthright partisanship, from an army frozen in thought to an army marching."

In the *Chorus for Survival* one seems to discern the chorus for the survival of the unfittest emotions, cryptic soul scratching—rather than the survival of those laboring masses fit to take hold of the world and thus create a new life.

As one whose road to Communism was wrought with what seems to him the same spiritual difficulties as Horace Gregory's, the same intellectual waverings, the same aversion to "joining up," always mentally reserving for himself the right to be a "nationalist in the sense in which you or I describe the inheritance of culture," this reviewer has nothing but the profoundest sympathy for this poet, who like himself seems to be everlastingly tripping over the merest aesthetical shred as though it were a stumbling block of insurmountable dimensions—only we hope to extricate himself from himself at last—a transitory phase in the life of a Communist writer whose emotionalism is still rooted in the false idea that artists are people apart from the ordinary run of human beings.

Having declared his poetical scruples in regard to political action, Gregory may now, so to speak, hear his own voice. We feel sure that when he hears it, his bourgeois liberal talk "of one day we may be told to read Proust and the next day to drop him," will sound as unconvincing as it is untrue of the revolutionary movement.

Perhaps Horace Gregory will turn once more to the John Reed Club (among whose founders he is) for further clarification on certain aspects of Marxian dialectics, as they differ from the "teachings of the Lovestonites and Trotskyites" whose role he misunderstands.

In conclusion, it is certain that Horace Gregory, by active participation in our revolutionary movement will ultimately learn to sing with the workers rather than about them, and instead of a futile effort to grasp the fallen torch of civilization by its dying smoke, the poet will get hold of it by its more realistic butt end. No, Horace Gregory, it is not exactly "victory" we "want you to shout at this moment," but to cry "hold the fort" to those who fight underground in Hitler's Germany, in Schuschnigg's Austria, in Mussolini's Italy, in Leroux-Roble's Spain or in our own growing plague spots.

MOISHE NADIR.

The New Lenin Edition

COLLECTED WORKS OF V. I. LENIN. 8 volumes. Special Anniversary Subscribers Edition. International Publishers. $8.

INTERNATIONAL Publishers have celebrated their tenth anniversary with a publishing feat. The publication of their eight volumes of Lenin's Collected Works at an average price of a dollar a volume is something no bourgeois publishers could have carried through, not only because of the many and difficult problems involved in the collection, authentication, annotation and translation of Lenin's writings, but also because of the economics involved. Bank loans, dividends, high salaries, subsidies to family members of former owners, all would have stood between them and their bringing the writings of perhaps the greatest mind of our time within reach of the largest possible public.

But transcending these considerations, of course, is the cultural and political importance of such a collected edition. In the writing of what other man, in any part of the world, is there so much vitality, so much truth, so much of the very information, exhortation and experience that mankind needs at this moment?

It is the truth and vitality of what Lenin has to say which makes these books so important to all now living. His writing is quite artless; he is no literary practitioner—save in the way any honest man burning to convey a message is. If his style is artless, it is also extremely effective. His simple, direct, oratorical style was successfully put to many diverse uses, for satire and invective, for exposition, narration and declamation, for analysis, synthesis, condemnation and eulogy. His style, above all else, is that of the man of action, to whom writing is also a form of action.

That well-known Catholic, Ernest Hemingway, in those portions of *Death in the Afternoon* devoted to his reflections on the craft of writing, said: "I found the greatest difficulty, aside from knowing truly what you really felt, rather than what you were supposed to feel and had been taught to feel, was to put down what really happened in action." The difficulty of doing this very thing in the economic and political realms is immeasurably greater. Those who can perceive truth at a time when 99 percent of mankind is unaware that there is even a problem, are geniuses. Those who can set down these glimpses of truth in words, so that they may be transferred to others and be realized in almost immediate action, are very great writers indeed; and anyone who can begin to apply advance truth to surrounding conditions is *ipso facto* a great man.

Lenin did all of these things. More than any other man in the memory of those now living, he dissipated the time lag: that disreputable interval between the human perception of truth and its application. Here is the basic reason for the supreme importance of this collection of books. They speak not only to the present but also to the future; for, long before the capitalist world and especially American capitalism began to turn, in its despair, to fascism, Lenin was objectively testing and solving the problems that compose the degeneration of capitalism.

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The effects of Lenin's writings upon the world have, of course, been incalculable. In the political realm no other writing in our generation is comparable. As the preeminent theoretician of the Bolsheviks, his writings not only materially accelerated the success of the October Revolution and solidified the socialist State in the early days of the Soviet Republics, but they have guided revolutionary activity in all parts of the world since, just as they did before. Marx has had no more creative and effective a successor and Lenin's collected writings provide a complete panorama of all phases of revolutionary activity in all parts of the world during the earth's most significant quarter century.

The eight volumes which constitute this edition do not, obviously, exhaust the entire range of Lenin's output. That will require some thirty volumes and enormous labor. The first two volumes cover the period between the spring of 1900 and the beginning of 1902. They begin with the heart-breaking antics of Plekhanov and the consequent threat of extinction for the important revolutionary journal, The Spark. The concluding section is the famous work, *What Is to Be Done?* which runs to about 170 pages, and in which Lenin synthesized the basic ideas on policy and tactic in the revolutionary movement contained in his previous writings.

The third volume, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* is Lenin's most important philosophical work, wherein he establishes the epistemological base for the Marxian philosophy and dialectic materialism, providing the rationale wherewith the Marxian revisionists, misreading the implications of modern science, may be confounded.

The fourth volume, *The Imperialist War,* begins with a short biographical statement about Marx, an examination of his philosophy, an exposition of his economic doctrine (value, surplus value and the tactics of the class struggle of the proletariat). This occupies scarcely sixty pages and the remainder contains all of Lenin's speeches, papers, resolutions, etc., from September, 1914 until December, 1915. These provide an elucidation of the causes of imperialist war, an exposure of the social-chauvinism and social-patriotism of the dominant leadership of the Second International and a conclusive presentation of the Marxian program and tactic with regard to war. At that time Lenin's chief antagonist was Kautsky, and his riddling of Kautsky's centrism, with its rationalization of hesitation and straddling, furnishes the classic answer to the centrists of all countries and all epochs. Lenin's analysis of the events occurring in all parts of the world during that period is literally exciting and reminds one of the amazing commentaries made by Marx when, similarly, he was surveying the international scene of his time.

The fifth and sixth volumes, *The Revolution of 1917,* present the record of Lenin at the very pinnacle of his revolutionary activity, when he was making decisions so true that they are still guides; when he was determining the course of world events and the future of society. The two volumes cover four months—the period from March, 1917, when Lenin heard the news of the overthrowing of the Romanoffs, until July, when the first open clash between the workers and the provisional government occurred and Lenin was driven into hiding.

The seventh and eighth volumes, *Toward the Seizure of Power,* contain all of Lenin's letters and articles from July up to the October Revolution. The eighth volume also contains the invaluable work, *State and Revolution.* These last four volumes form a unity. They cover the entire course of the Russian Revolution of 1917. In them, for the first time in history, is a living picture of the organizer and leader of a revolution at work; here we have the very words which made history.

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HENRY HART.

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Brief Review

NEW PIONEER STORY BOOK. Edited by Martha Campion. (New Pioneer Publishing Co. New York City. 25c.) The first book of stories from the proletarian viewpoint. Excellently conceived work for children between nine and fourteen. Proletarian in price, too, yet in illustrations and typography it compares favorably with the regular two dollar children's books turned out by any of the capitalist publishing mills.

SMARA, THE FORBIDDEN CITY, by Michel Vieuchange. With a preface by Paul Claudel. Illustrated. (E. P. Dutton Co. $2.75.) In the great tradition of exploration. Single-handed, like his predecessor who discovered the sources of the Niger, Vieuchange penetrated to the deserted and forbidden city of Smara and died there. His journals were intended as notes for a book; in themselves they have a directness and a continuity that make good reading.

ACT OF DARKNESS, by John Peale Bishop. (Charles Scribners' Sons. $2.50.) Sin as a release in the tortured and decadent society of the aristocratic South is the motif of this sensitively written novel. (Little, however, is gained by this sight into the sickroom.)

READER, by E. D. Manevich. (Published by State Textbook Publishing House, Moscow. On sale at Workers' Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street, New York City. 35c.) In spite of some obscurities of translation and a few expressions that sound strange to us, this reader used by English-speaking children in Soviet schools is vastly superior in content drawn from life to the American public school readers with their fairy tales, sentimentalities and bluebirdy tone.

RENASCENT MEXICO. Edited by Herbert Weinstock. (Covici-Friede. $2.50.) Mexico's leading Trotskyite is a contributor to this symposium by the specialists of the seminar conducted each summer in Mexico by the Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America. There is much concern with the Indian, especially his art, and a reassurance that everything will turn out all right with more education and the demagogue Calles' fake six-year plan.

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Art

Frank Lloyd Wright's Utopia

THE most recent of the Big Business Fairs to be housed in Mr. Rockefeller's monument to himself is called "The Industrial Arts Exposition—A Preview of Prosperity" (no fooling), and if it is still going when this appears, you are hereby advised not to waste your time or money on it. It is somewhat amazing and very instructive to learn what can be included under the term Industrial Art, these days. The latest orange drink, corn plaster, automobile polish, life insurance, Encyclopedia Britannica, etc., —and a nice Police Department booth with an elaborate display of "our modern efficiency"—are now Art. Also included are a few objects, mainly utilitarian, whose efficient functioning and economy of manufacture have resulted in good design. They are hard to find amidst the general welter of junk.

The most important display in the exhibition is Frank Lloyd Wright's set of scale models for his "Broadacre City, A New Community Plan," which is explained and illustrated in a ten-cent brochure that presents his ideas on architecture in general and community planning in particular. Briefly, Mr. Wright offers as a solution, not only for architecture but for everything that's wrong with present-day society, *Decentralization.* In fact his opening sentence lists "decentralization" as "one of the inherent rights of man." He has worked out a "four-square-miles-1,400 families" unit which is intended to be self-contained and includes

> . . . *little* farms, *little* homes for industry, *little* factories, *little* schools, a *little* university going to the people mostly by way of their interest in the ground, *little* laboratories on their own ground for professional men.

He sums up in a paragraph, as follows:

> To reiterate: the basis of the whole is general decentralization . . . free use of the ground held only by use and improvements; public utilities and government itself owned by the people of Broadacre City; privacy on one's own ground for all and fair means of subsistence for all by way of their work on their own ground or in common offices serving the life of the whole. Individuality established on such terms must thrive. Unwholesome life would get no encouragement and the ghastly heritage left by overcrowding in overdone ultra-capitalistic centers would be likely to disappear in three or four generations.

Despite his badly confused notions of the nature of social forces in our society—(only a serious and completely sincere person could have written such a naive concoction of adolescent idealism and Wellsian it's-all-done-with-push-buttons fiction)—Frank Lloyd Wright must be regarded as one of the important forces in progressive American architectural thought. This not only for his distinguished record of achievement and courageous pioneering over a long period of years, but because his creative talents and intellectual integrity have driven him forward by the *inner logic of his craft* to an anti-capitalist position. He is virtually alone among the prominent architects of this country in his approach to the fundamental problems of present-day architecture as primarily socio-economic. He posits as basic in his scheme such profound changes as

> . . . free use of the ground . . . ownership of government and utilities by the people . . . a fair means of subsistence for everyone . . . etc.,

without seeming to understand what these things mean, nor how they can be attained. He has simply taken author's license to create a utopia of his own making. He has provided houses, factories, offices, etc., that have adequate light, space, air, facilities and many other of the desirables of good living. He has a generally healthy sense of values as to what constitutes "an ideal life," in terms of material welfare and socially-useful activity by the individual, but it is this very approach to the problem as one of simply drawing up the blueprints for "the ideal life" that makes the project irrelevant and even ludicrous as a program for American architecture today. No truly progressive community planning can be founded on any other than the *immediate* (as well as future) needs, *political* and material, of the exploited working population of the country. Beyond the broadest of generalities it is very difficult to say what is usable in Mr. Wright's project for a "future society." We are safe in aiming at decent living and working conditions (as understood in terms of present-day standards of technology) for the entire population, but whether housing and industry should be on the basis of large- or small-scale units is not a question that can be settled by arbitrary fiat. Any practicable revolutionary program for American architecture today will have to utilize the existing large-scale units as a basis for immediate needs, while planning for gradual modification toward a more decentralized economy; but to what extent and in what form this decentralization will take place is premature (though perhaps interesting) speculation.

As far as relevance to an immediate program is concerned, the significance of Mr. Wright's project is that it points inexorably to the necessity for the removal of capitalism and the creation of a socialist society as the primary condition for the progressive development of architecture.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER.

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Theatre Notes

The Young Go First, by Martin, Scudder and Friedman. (*Park Theatre.*) The sparkling, colorful full-length play about the C.C.C., written produced and acted by one of the leading working-class groups: Theatre of Action (formerly Workers Laboratory Theatre). Robust acting and direction, and a particularly fine set by Mordecai Gorelik. Tickets as low as 25 cents.

Waiting for Lefty and *Till the Day I Die, by Clifford Odets.* (*Longacre Theatre.*) A double-bill of unsurpassed dramatic importance. The Group Theatre's production of *Waiting for Lefty* is something you will never forget. Odets' faithful study of German Communists in their underground activity has flashes of inspiring heroism. Tickets as low as 40 cents.

Parade. (*Guild Theatre.*) You probably won't need to be told that the Guild has heartily emasculated the original version by Paul Peters and George Sklar. But you may have to be convinced that Parade is worth seeing. It's one of the most entertaining programs now running on Broadway. Some seats at $1.10.

Awake and Sing. by Clifford Odets. (*Belasco Theatre.*) After a good deal of critical praise and blame, *Awake and Sing* emerges as one of the big achievements of the season. Rich and robust portrait of a Bronx family, of the pain and degradation which poverty inflicts on its life. Acted with warmth and profound understanding. Tickets as low as 50 cents.

S. B.

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Confessions of an Opium Sitter

ROBERT FORSYTHE

I HAVE been fighting it for years but I'm afraid there is no use. For a time I thought I could break myself by taking long walks or by getting drunk or by traveling in such remote regions that even the Sunday papers couldn't reach me, but I soon realized I was only dodging the issue instead of conquering it. There were periods when I tried to convince myself that what I was doing was not only legally permissible and ultra-patriotic but also sensible. As an extreme gesture I even took up golf, thinking that by degrees I might return to sanity, but that venture was no more successful than the others. It ended one fine June day when, despite everything I could do, the subway train which had been marked Van Cortland Park suddenly swerved about and ended up at the Polo Grounds. There I was again, in all my shame, sitting in the grandstand shouting remarks at the umpires, remarks which even to my own ears sounded fantastic. Things were further complicated on that historic day of my return by the fact that I still carried the bag of golf clubs and looked rather like a fool as I sat there surrounded by my old comrades who held a score card in one hand and a hot dog in the other and wondered what strange conceit had overtaken me. We solved everything in the eighth inning, however, by using a few of the clubs as spears to hurl at the enemy (the St. Louis Cards were playing that day, I recall) and breaking the others over the heads of such few patrons present who maintained that Dizzy Dean was the superior of Carl Hubbell.

What prompts me to this confession is the retirement of a man who will rank in history with Charlemagne, H. G. Wells and Napoleon. I refer, as you well know, to Babe Ruth. You may smile, you may even scoff, but I tell you in all seriousness that Babe Ruth is the superior of any of these men and it is a shame that Joe Jackson wasn't still playing when they introduced the lively ball. I have been told that there are people who have never heard of Joe Jackson but I know the heart of America too well to believe any nonsense of that sort. It is all very well to jest but there are certain matters too sacred for levity. Joe Jackson retired because of an unfortunate deal with gamblers by which he and a few of his associates on the Chicago White Sox threw a World Series to Cincinnati, but Babe Ruth retired because of a violent protest from his legs. If I quote such news with the show of a sob, it is because I am an addict. I have tried to convince myself that baseball is not an opiate and here I find myself filled to the brim with poison.

Was I elated when the Normandie docked several weeks ago? I was not even clear whether it was the first boat which had ever crossed the Atlantic or just the latest. My chief concern at the moment was the imminent fall of the Brooklyn Dodgers into the second division in the National League. Did I rejoice with the rest of the world at the spectacle of Mrs. Ogden Reid of The New York Herald Tribune being honored by Oglethorpe College? Instead I was mourning over Babe Ruth being discharged because he had been an evil influence over the young men who made up the roster of the Boston Braves. If you want to be extreme about it, I'm lost. I think men like Charley Stoneham of the New York Giants and Colonel Ruppert of the New York Yankees and Sam Breadon of the St. Louis Cardinals are public-spirited men of the highest type for supplying good baseball without thought of profit. What touched my heart in the Boston imbroglio between Babe Ruth and Judge Fuchs was not Mr. Ruth's tribute to Judge Fuch's character but the baseball the Boston team autographed and presented to Mr. Ruth. There was something about this which got me and I think Babe could well forget the loss of his year's salary ($25,000) for the sake of his Boston uniform, which the management announced would be turned over to him with the club's compliments as a memento of his stay with the team. That thoughtfulness was only matched by the action of Mr. Breadon of St. Louis in saying that if Manager Frisch fined Dizzy Dean $10,000 for insubordination, he would even increase the amount of the fine to show his faith in his manager. The fine would go back into the treasury of the club and perhaps go to the purchase of other players, who in turn could be fined out of most of their salaries. In this way business could be stimulated and something very excellent done in the way of greasing the wheels of industry. If Mr. Dean does not want to abide by the authority of the club, he need only quit and take up some other line of work. If he doesn't know any other line of work, he had better be grateful for what is being done for him. It isn't every young man who has a chance to spend his summer days in the open air in the presence of thousands of people who have paid their money to enjoy his pleasure.

There was a third incident in the past weeks which showed what a hold baseball has on the hearts of the people. I refer to the case of Alabama Pitts, who graduated from a five-year course at Sing Sing to a position with the Albany club of the International League. In itself it is a refutation of the scoffers who profess to see a dark future for our youth. What Mr. Pitts has done, any young man can do. What made his appearance in the news so striking was the refusal of the higher authorities in minor league baseball to allow Mr. Pitts to accept the Albany job. At first there was great agitation about the discrimination against a young man who had paid his debt to the state and was seeking now to make his way back to respect, but this changed later to a recognition that perhaps he was getting his just deserts. I must confess that my own views were altered by something Mr. Pitts said at the height of the controversy. He seemed reconciled to the way fate was treating him. This in itself was suspicious but the worst

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fears were confirmed when he said in answer to a question about his reaction to the ruling of the baseball powers: "I suppose you can't blame them. They're trying to do the best they can. After all, baseball is a business and they have to protect themselves."

It is rather easy to see how Mr. Pitts got into trouble in the first place. Baseball is a business, he says glibly. Well, I resent that and I believe every red-blooded American joins me in my resentment. Perhaps I shouldn't be so upset about things of this sort, but it is difficult to be silent in the face of such sentiments. Urged by the more serious of my friends, I have tried to spend less time in a grandstand seat but there are moments when I realize the importance of my sporting interest. If by some small word or deed I can do anything to further the most honorable sport any nation ever had, I am content to be ridiculed. I believe in the Constitution of the United States and in the practice of walking Lou Gehrig with runners on second and third. On that platform I take my stand.

Between Ourselves

THE next quarterly issue, dated July 2, will be fiction number. The additional sixteen-page section will be devoted entirely to short stories, with an introductory article by Alan Calmer.

The selection of the stories has been entrusted to a special committee of writers and editors, who have been in touch with fiction writers in all parts of the country. Final decisions are being made as this issue goes to press, and full details will be given next week.

Josephine Herbst has another story to tell about "Realengo 18" the famous Soviet in Cuba of which she wrote in our issue of March 19, and it will appear in an early issue.

Granville Hicks will make a coast-to-coast lecture tour under the auspices of THE NEW MASSES Lecture Bureau in the Fall. He plans to remain some time in Oregon, in connection with his forthcoming biography of John Reed.

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